

THE *257*
QUESTION,
Whether it be RIGHT
To Turn METHODIST,
CONSIDERED.
IN A
DIALOGUE
BETWEEN
TWO MEMBERS
OF THE
CHURCH of *England.*

Prove all Things : Hold fast that which is good.

1 Thess. v. 21.

*Be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh
you a Reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness and
Fear.*

1 Pet. iii. 15.

*Ad Salutem ac Vitam æternam nemo pervenit, nisi qui habet
Caput CHRISTUM: habere autem Caput CHRISTUM nemo
poterit, nisi qui in ejus Corpore fuerit, quod est ECCLESIA.*

Aug. ad Petilian. p. 155.

L O N D O N:

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QUESTIONS

TO THE

R. F. D. K.



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TO THE

THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
READER.

THE Author of the ensuing Tract, desirous, I suppose, to remain unknown, having sent me the MS. with a Liberty to publish or suppress it; I have, with the Advice of some good Judges, committed it to the Press, in hopes it will appear a seasonable, as well as more reasonable, Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, than what we have lately seen under that Title.

The great Danger of further Apostasy from the best-constituted Church in the World, may seem Apology enough for the Publication. And the Language of Dialogue, being the easiest and best adapted to all Capacities, as well as warranted by the Example of the most celebrated Pagan, as well as Christian, Writers, is Argument sufficient for the Method the Author has chosen.

Though it appear to be designed as an Antidote and Preservative against a growing Evil, rather than an Answer to any particular Writings on the other Side the Question; yet we have the Charity

rity to hope, their most distinguished Leaders will seriously and candidly consider what is offered on a Subject of so great Importance to the Peace and Unity of the Church: At least, that the sincere, though wavering, and as yet unalienated, Members of our Communion, for whose Use it seems chiefly designed, will make a wise Retreat in Time, and avoid the dangerous Precipice that lies before them. And as so much unwearied Pains have been taken to lead captive the Serious, but Unwary, it cannot but appear commendable, in every faithful Member of our Holy Church, to exert and unite their utmost Zeal, and best Endeavours, to preserve and settle those who are yet within the Fold; although they may not be so happy as to reduce such as are too far gone astray. — This, and not Controversy, appearing to have been the Author's sole Intention, it is with the same View, and with an earnest Apprecation to Heaven for its Success, most humbly tendered to the gentle and pious Reader, by

The Publisher.

T H E

DIALOGUE

ON THE

QUESTION,

WHETHER

It be right to TURN METHODIST.

* TIMEUS and † PATROBAS.

Timeus.

SIR, a good Morning to you. I am come to wait on you for your Advice in an Affair of some Consequence to me; and hope this early Visit from an old Friend on such an account will not be troublesome or unseasonable.

Patro. You are heartily welcome; and I rejoice to see you: Not having seen you at our Church of late, I feared you were not well.

Tim. Were my Mind as well in Health as my Body, you would have seen me oftener there.

Patro. Pray, good Sir, what is the matter?

Tim. I am much importuned to turn *Methodist*.

* *Timæus*, From *Mark* x. 46. A Name derived from the Syriac Word *Tam*, which signifies *polluted*. The Latin *Contamino*, to defile, contaminate, seems also derived from hence.

† *Patrobas*, from *Rom.* xvi. 14. A Greek Name, which signifies, *treading in his Father's Steps*; qui Paternis insistit vestigiis.

B

Patro.

Patro. Are you so? Pray let me know what you mean by a *Methodist*.

Tim. Why, one that hears and follows the Doctrine of Mr. *Wesley*, and those Preachers, who teach a much stricter Rule and Method of Life than is generally practised by any others, who are commonly called Christians.

Patro. To aspire after greater Strictness in our Life and Conversation, than is *commonly* practised, is a very laudable Ambition; for it is a melancholy, but too notorious a Truth, that most People, now-a-days, lead very loose and careless Lives. But, that we may know where the Fault lies, and whether it be advisable for you to *turn*, as you call it; let us consider the Nature and Reason of the Change you are advised to. In the first Place let me ask you, what your present Profession is, which you are to *turn from*?

Tim. I am a Member of the Church of *England*.

Patro. Then I take it for granted that you were Baptized into that Church; that you have been Confirm'd, and admitted to the Holy Communion.

Tim. I have so.

Patro. If you have, what Reason can you have for thinking of a *Change*? or what may the Arguments be, that can be urged to induce you to forsake the Way you have been bred in, and hitherto pursued?

Tim. They are a great many; and I cannot but own they stagger me very much. In the first Place, they tell us, "Except we be *Regenerate* and *Born again*, we cannot be saved:" That, "Without a *full Assurance* of Faith in Christ, we can have no hopes of Heaven:" That, "The Church of *England* does not teach us these Doctrines:" That, "Her Ministers teach nothing but *Works*;" "whereas St. *Paul* teaches the quite contrary,"

and often tells us, “ We cannot be saved by *Works*, but by *Faith in Jesus Christ*.” And, indeed, the Texts they bring for these Things, seem so plain, that I cannot gainsay them. On the other hand, they affirm, with great Confidence, That, by embracing *their* Doctrines, we shall not only receive the true Faith in Christ, and become *Regenerate*, but have an immediate *Sense* and *Feeling* of the new Birth: That, “ We shall instantly “ perceive the Working of God’s Spirit in our “ Hearts, and find ourselves thoroughly Renewed, “ and become *New Creatures* :” That, “ We shall “ be fully *assured* of our State of Grace, get “ above the Fears of Death, the Power of Sin, “ and be secured from all Danger of falling away.” And indeed I see and know so many, who, from very loose and reprobate Lives, are become not only sober, but holy and devout Persons, that, as I told you before, I cannot help thinking, but that God is with them of a truth, and in a very extraordinary manner; that they teach the right and sure way to Salvation; and that, if there be such a thing as Perfection and sinless Obedience in this World, *these* are the People, who are possessed of it.

Patro. I will not deny but that the Benefits, these Men ascribe to Faith in Christ, are undoubted Truths, and exceeding comfortable, so as to deserve our earnest Pains, and most sincere Endeavours to obtain them. In themselves, I say, they are true and most desirable Blessings: But if I can convince you, that they are to be had in the Establish’d Church, and in her only; you’ll have no Reason for turning from her to *Methodism*, or any other Sect whatsoever that separates from her. But I perceive (and you must excuse my Freedom in observing it), that you are one, among too many of the Members of our Church, who have not duly

studied the *Grounds* of your Religion, nor examined the *Principles* of our excellent Church, with that Care and Attention, you ought to have done; and therefore do not enough consider the Necessity and indispensable Duty of CHURCH UNITY. This too common Neglect, is the *only* Reason, why any of her Members do ever forsake her Communion; and is indeed so great a Fault, that I do not wonder, that God is provoked to let them fall away into many hurtful Errors, and strong Delusions. Before therefore we can come to the Points, which you say have byassed you so much in favour of these new Teachers, there are two previous Questions, which seem to me of prime Necessity to be considered: 1st, A right Notion concerning the Church in General, which we commonly call the *Catholick Church*. 2dly, Whether the Church of *England* be a true Member of that Church. It is to little purpose to dispute about the *Doctrines* of Religion, and argue never so plausibly about *Faith* and *Works*, and those other Opinions, which are the present Subjects of Debate, and have so much unhinged your Mind, except we be first secure of the *Ground* we stand upon, and know certainly whether we be true Members of Christ's mystical Body the Church, or not; and likewise be able to give a *Reason of the Hope that is in us*.

As to the first, I take it for granted that you firmly believe, *there is a Catholick Church upon Earth*, because this is one of those Articles you promised and vowed to believe, when you were baptized. That is, you profess to believe, that there is such a Church in the World, founded by Christ and his Apostles, and therefore *holy*; preach'd to every Creature (that is, certainly, to all Mankind) and therefore *Catholick* or Universal; that this Church is *one*, as was signified by *Noah's Ark*, the *Temple of Jerusalem*, &c. that therefore it is the
Pillar

Pillar and Ground of Truth, the *House of God*, out of which there is no Salvation. Consequently you cannot be insensible of what Importance it is to your Salvation, to be ascertain'd and well assured, whether you are *in* this Church or not; and the Danger you must necessarily incur in forsaking her Communion; because, as it follows in our Creed, in her, and her only, is *the Communion of Saints*. Tho' this be generally believed, or at least a Profession made thereof, as oft as we repeat the Creed, it is not sufficiently Considered. And this, at the Bottom, is the true Cause of all those Disputes, Divisions, and Schisms, which break the Unity and Peace of the Church, as well as the Charity of its Members. There can be therefore no way more effectual for preventing so great an Evil, than a right Knowledge of the *Church*, and a well-grounded Persuasion of the Nature and Necessity of *Church Unity*. Now the *Catholick Church* is the true Standard and Original, to which all *particular Churches* are to be conform'd, and by which they can be known; even as the Tabernacle in the Wilderness was commanded of God to be made *after the Pattern*, which he had shewn to *Moses* in the Mount. To know then the *true Church of God*, let us consider,

1st, Her *Nature*, what she is: And,

2dly, The *Marks and Characters*, by which she may be distinguished and known.

1st, As to her *Nature*; The Church, in general, or, as we call it, *the Catholick Church*, is that Spiritual Empire or Kingdom, which Christ has erected in the World, to which all must be *added*, or admitted into, that will be saved.

As subject to, and inseparably united to, one Head, *Jesus Christ*, and for that reason call'd *his Body*, yea, ^a *the Fulness of him that filleth all in all*, she can be but *One*: ^b *One Fold, One Shepherd*.

^a Eph. i. 23.

^b John x. 16.

But,

But, whether we consider her as a *Body*, she must as necessarily, according to the Nature of a Body, consist ^c of many Members, all fitly join'd together, and compacted according to that which every Joint supplieth; or, if we consider her as a *Kingdom*, and universal Empire, spread over the Face of the Earth, this must take in all those Nations throughout the World, which profess Subjection thereto. So that it is plain the Catholick Church is cantoned and divided into several *national* Churches, as so many Districts or Parts of Christ's universal Kingdom; in like manner as we read of the Empire of the ^d Medes and Persians, that it was divided into many lesser Kingdoms, under the same Head, even an hundred and seven-and-twenty Provinces. This diversity of Members then does not destroy the *Unity* of the Church, while it preserves the mystical Union with its Divine Head; but enlarges, completes, and perfects it, in all its Parts.

Now, One Member of this universal Kingdom of Christ is the *Church of England*; for no one will say, but that she is a *National*, yea the *only* National Church in this *Realm*; because she, and she alone, is the Church *Establish'd* here by the *Laws of the Land*. And herein she is not only a Member of, but she bears the exact Image of, the Catholick Church: For as that, tho' consisting of many *National* Churches, is but One in the World; so our Church, tho' partitioned into sundry particular *Diocesan* and *Parochial* Churches, as Members of the same Body, is but One Church in this Kingdom.

We find then, that in contemplating the *Nature* of the Church, her first Character is *Unity*; yea, such a Unity as Faith tells us there is in the Nature of God, a Unity with Plurality: She is One, and

^c Eph. iv. 16.

^d Esther i. 1.

and more than One. And as herein she resembles and bears the Image of God, whose Daughter she is (for she is * *the Daughter of the great King*), so the Church of *England* resembles Her, in the Unity of her Nature, as well as Likeness of Feature, and Symmetry of Parts.

A second Property of her *Nature* is, that she is partly *Visible*, partly *Invisible*. The Church has an outward Form, and an inward Spiritual Being: and herein she resembles the Person of her Divine Founder. As he sustained two Natures, Divine and Human, and was therefore *visible* and *invisible*, while he sojourned upon Earth; so is his Church, and every particular Church that is formed on the same Model, *visible* in her outward Constitution, Government, and Ministry, her Doctrines and Discipline; but *invisible* with respect to that Spiritual Relation, by which she, and her faithful Members, are united to her Sacred Head *Jesus Christ*, and animated by the Inhabitation of his Holy Spirit. This made the Psalmist say of her, *She is all glorious WITHIN; her Cloathing is of wrought Gold*; that is to say, her *inward* Beauty is Divine Grace; her *outward* and visible Form (of Constitution and Order) adorns her like a noble Piece of Robing, curiously embroidered with Gold, and magnificently rich. Internally she shines gloriously in the Eyes of God; externally in the Sight of Men.

2dly, As to the *Marks* of the Catholick Church, they are chiefly these Four; her *Foundation*; her *Method of admitting Members*; her *Charter*; and her *Laws*. And these, according to her Nature, are partly *visible*, and partly *invisible*. As we go along, we shall compare the Church of *England* by these Marks.

1. As to her *Foundation*; this is built on Faith in Christ: So saith Christ himself; *On this Rock*
[to

* Psalm xlv.

[to wit, the Profession which St. Peter made of this Faith, *Matt. xvi. 16.*] *will I build my Church.*

The Church of *England* is built on the very same Rock ; her *Foundation* is the same, and her Builder the same. See her *Articles*, &c.

2. The *Way of Admission* into this Spiritual Building and Kingdom, is by *Baptism* :—So Christ ; *He that believeth* [as above] *and is Baptized, shall be saved*, *Mark xvi. 16.* *They that gladly received the Word* [i. e. believed in Jesus Christ on the Word preach'd] *were Baptized, and added to the Church.* *Acts ii. 41 and 47.*

It is evident, that *Baptism* is the only instituted Means of admitting Members into the Church of *England*. This Ordinance she uses in Obedience to Christ's positive Institution, and in Conformity with the Catholick Church in all Ages, in adding Souls to the Church ; and no other.

3. The *Charter of Incorporation*, by which the Catholick Church holds all her Spiritual Privileges and Immunities, under Christ her Head, is the *Second Covenant* : This is made in Baptism, and is no other than the Gospel itself ; for in Reference to this, the *New Testament* is titled and call'd [*Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη*, which properly signifies] the *New Covenant*, and is therefore call'd Gospel, or *glad Tidings*, because it conveys to us that joyful Message of Peace, and Covenant of Salvation from God the Father, which his Son our Lord has published to the World ; and, for which, he is call'd by the Prophet, *† The Messenger of the Covenant* ; and by the Apostle, *‡ The Mediator of the New Covenant*.

The Church of *England* has the very same *Charter* ; and in virtue thereof, is intitled to the
same

† *Mal. iii. 1.*

‡ *Heb. xi. 15.*

same Privileges and Immunities with the Catholick Church ; nor doth she admit any into her Communion, but such as, by this holy Covenant at their Baptism are incorporated into the Church Catholick. For which Reason, this Covenant is one of the *first* Principles she instructs her Members in ; as we see by that Summary of her Fundamentals contain'd in her *Catechism*.

4. The *Laws and Statutes* of Christ's Kingdom upon Earth, are the *Scriptures*, and Word of God. As Catholick, she is govern'd by no Other : Her Powers being purely Spiritual, and her Constitution not of Man nor from Man, but immediately from Christ, her Sovereign Lord and King, she admits of no Laws in *divine* Things but *his* : And he hath said, ^a *My Kingdom is not of this World*.

Our Church, as Member of the Church *Catholick*, has the very same *Laws* :—In *Spiritual* Things she receives no other. See her 6th *Article*. But as she is a *national* Church, she submits (as all *national* Churches ought, and are ¹ commanded so to do) to the municipal Laws of the Land ; in all Things, I mean, that are not contrary to the Laws of God. In Temporals, she is *subject to the higher Powers* ; ^k submitting to the King as supreme, and to the Magistrates as unto them that are sent by him ; but in *Spiritual* Things she is subject to God alone.

5. In a Word ; Does the Catholick Church hold the Form of sound Words contain'd in the *Apostles Creed*, as the necessary Articles of Faith ? So doth the Church of *England*. Doth she hold the *Ten Commandments* of God as the Rule of Practice ? So doth the Church of *England*. Doth she give us the *Prayer of our Lord* as the Pattern and Form of Ours ? So doth the Church of *England*. Doth she

^a John xviii. 36. ¹ Rom. xiii. 1. ^k 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

teach and administer the two Sacraments, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which Christ ordain'd in his Church? So doth the Church of *England*. See her 25th *Article*.

In short, whatever Marks and Tokens we find in the Primitive and Original Frame of the *Catholick Church*, as founded by Christ and his Apostles, and distinguished from all other Communities or Societies of Men; these we find likewise in the *Church of England*; she also being ¹ *built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*. So that we may safely conclude, she is a sound and genuine Member of the Church Catholick, and therefore a *true Church of Christ*.

Tim. But, besides the above-mention'd Marks, wherein this national Church of ours agrees with the Holy Catholick Church, you say there are other Marks and Characters more obvious and apparent to the Eyes of the World, as she is a *Visible Church*, wherein also she agrees in her *Outward and Visible Form* with the Church Universal. Pray, what are they?

Patro. That the Church militant upon Earth is partly visible, and partly invisible, we have indeed observed before, as a Property of her *Nature*: The same is signified to us in the very Article of our Creed, [*the Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints*;] which making but one Clause or Article of our Faith, does plainly teach us, that, as Catholick, she must necessarily be *visible* to all that have Eyes to see; but as a *Communion of SAINTS*, she is *invisible* to Men, and seen and known to God alone. This *St. Paul* means, when he saith, that she has this Seal, ^m *The Lord knoweth them that are his*; God alone being the Searcher of Hearts,
and

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

^m 2 Tim. ii. 19.

and the King of Saints. This might be illustrated by the Nature of the Human Frame (to which the Church is compared) which is a Compound of Body and Soul; by the *Scripture* also, which we are told, has a *Letter* and a *Spirit*; by a *Temple* likewise, which has an outward Structure, and the Deity residing within; and by the Nature of the *Sacraments*, which have an outward and visible Sign, with an inward and Spiritual Grace: Not to mention again the very Nature of her holy Founder *Jesus Christ*, who, consisting of two Natures, was *visible* in the Flesh, but, with respect to his Divinity, *no Man hath seen or can see*; besides the remarkable Analogy there is between the Works of Grace and Nature, on the Similitude of which the Parables of our Lord are generally founded. This is more than sufficient to prove the *Visibility* and *Invisibility* of the Church. But it is not enough considered!

That God design'd she should be *visible*, appears plainly by the Types and Descriptions of her in Scripture: Not only the *Ark*, the *Tabernacle* in the Wilderness, the *Temple of Solomon*, were all visible Types and Figures of Christ's Church; but she is compared to a *great Mountain*; to a ⁿ *House established on the Top of the Mountains*, which all Nations should flow unto; and, by our Lord, to a ^o *City set upon a Hill, which cannot be hid*; to a ^p *Golden Candlestick*, yea to a ^q *Candle set* (not under a Bushel, but) *on a Candlestick, to give Light unto all that are in the House*.

Now, as all Marks of the *Church Visible* must needs be *external*, the *First Mark*, we'll say, is, that *Outward Profession she makes that she is the Church of Christ*. But this, perhaps, you will tell me, "Many spurious and false Churches profess to be; "That each pretends to be the true Church; but

ⁿ Isaiah ii. 2. ^o Matt. v. 14. ^p Rev. i. 20. ^q Matt. v. 15.

“ too many of them are no better than Synagogues of Satan.” I must answer, Your Objection is just; and therefore all that make such Profession, ought to be tried by the foregoing Marks and Characters; namely, their *Foundation*, their *Manner of Admission*, their *Charter of Incorporation*, their *Laws and Statutes*, as well as their Principles and Doctrines: All these must be well search’d into and examined. If these, or any of these things be lacking, they are no Churches, at least no *sound* Churches of Christ; but where they are all *found*, there is no room for Doubt.

2. *The Outward Conformity of Life and Conversation to so holy a Profession.* But, “ This, again, “ you’ll say, Is more uncertain than the former “ Mark; many of those, who not only profess “ Christ before Men, and hold the same *Faith*; “ who were seal’d with the same *Baptism*, incorporated by the same *Charter*, and acknowledge “ the same *Laws*; do yet deny all, by their Practice, and lead very ungodly and unchristian “ Lives: Whereas, on the other hand, many “ who have none of these Marks to shew, are very “ moral and serious Men.” With Sorrow I must grant you, that this is too true: But still, as we are in quest, not now of *good* MEN, but of the *true* CHURCH, we must here make a Distinction, between the *Lives* of Professors, and the *Principles* they profess. The bad Lives of Churchmen, or of any particular Men, must not be admitted as an Argument against the *Truths* they hold. St. Paul allows, that there are such Men, as “ *hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*. Their Unrighteousness then does not invalidate the Truth: It is, indeed, against the Truth, but cannot destroy it. Truth, like the Light, is its own best Evidence: It is not therefore to be falsified by the Errors of those, who profess

profess it; nor is Error to be justified for its plausible Appearance. To judge from the Use or Abuse of things, proves nothing but our own Fallibility: Wherefore, permit me to give you this Caution, that, in making the Comparison between *our* Church and the Primitive, or between the Church of *England*, and other Churches or People who call themselves Christian, you ought to take her as she is *in herself*, and in her own pure and native State; excluding, on one hand, the bad Lives of any of her Members; and, on the other, the unsound or unsettled Notions and Doctrines of some of her Teachers and Writers. Draw the Parallel, and make your Estimate, from none but *Herself*, and her own authentick Records; I mean those Writings and Books, which she *herself* has published, and put into our Hands. Now these are the *Scriptures*, as *Translated by her*; her *Liturgy*; her *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*; the Book of *Homilies*; her *Form of making, ordaining and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons*; and her *Canons*. These are properly *her* Books, and *here* you are to look for *her* Doctrines and Principles; and, more particularly, for those Marks of Agreement between her and the Catholick Church. And where you see any of her Members live by *these* Rules (and surely you must know some that do), these are they, that bear Testimony to the Truth and Soundness of her Principles. To conclude then, Her Principles and holy Doctrines, so productive of a holy Life; and a holy Life, so founded upon her Principles, is the Second *external* Mark I had to lay before you; and this * *you will do well that you take heed to, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Heart*. We are, indeed, too much surrounded with Darknes, and our burning and shining

shining Lights but few: But I must tell you, They are the only true *Conformists* to the Church of *England*; follow *them*, and you will find the *true* Church. So we are to understand the 7th and 8th Verses of the 1st Chapter of *Canticles* ¹.

3. I shall add but one Mark more of the *Visible* Church, and that is, her *External Government*. This is the most conspicuous and visible of any; but such is the Untowardness of some Men, that no Mark is more contested and gainsaid *now* than this. That there should be a *Government* in the Church, is agreed and allowed by all;—but the Question is, *In whose Hands*, it is, or ought to be lodged. Some say, it is vested in their Ruling Elders; others, in the Teacher of every private Congregation independently of any other visible Governors: But we of the Church of *England*, say, *the Governing Power* is vested in the *Episcopate*, that is, in the *Bishops* (as a distinct Order, succeeding to the Order of Apostles) and the *Clergy* as Officers under them, in their several subordinate Stations and Orders. I shall not here enter into the Dispute (because I think it a needless one), Whether *this* Form of Church Government be of *Divine Right*, or not: We indeed, for very good Reasons, believe it so to be; but our Adversaries deny it. But whether it be of *Divine Right* or not, they cannot pretend to say it is not the *legal* and *establish'd* Government of the Church, in *this Nation*, and therefore, at least, a *Civil Right*. If the Church, as a visible Society, must have *some* Government, and consequently some Governors, or Persons to administer that Government; and the Laws of the Land (as well as of the Church) have determined, *Who* these shall be; is not that sufficient to decide the Question, and to satisfy any reasonable Man? Supposing then (but not granting) that *Episcopacy* is

¹ See St. *Augustine* to *Petilian*, on this Passage, ch. xvi. p. 152.

is no more than a *Civil* Institution, all the Subjects of *England* are obliged to submit thereto, having nothing to do, where the Law has decided in the Case, to inquire which Form is *best*, but which is *Authorized*; and are therefore to submit, and not to dispute: Especially considering, that although Government itself be of *Divine* Institution, yet the *External Form*, whatever it be, whether Episcopacy or Presbytery, cannot properly be reckoned among the *Essentials* or Fundamentals of Christianity. We think it indeed necessary, to the Preservation, good Order, and Well-being of the Church, but we look not upon it to be of *absolute* Necessity to its Essence or Being. A Church there was in the World before Episcopacy, and will be so to the End of it, whether there be Bishops or no.—Now, this I say (and St. *Augustin*, tho' himself a Bishop, says the same^u), to take off the Edge of the mighty Objection against the present Government, and establish'd Settlement of our Church; and to shew, that the Separation on *this* Account, is groundless, yea, inexcusably sinful, because a dreadful Rent is hereby made in the Unity of the Body of Christ (which is one of the most mortal Sins), for the sake of a Point, which, in itself, is confessed and allowed to be *indifferent*. For, suppose we grant, that it is not positively *commanded* in the Gospel, 'tis certain, nor do they pretend to say otherwise, it is nowhere absolutely *forbidden*. And where a Matter is left open and undetermined by the Laws of God, there the Laws of Man have an undoubted Right to determine, and to bind us to Obedience: For so the Law of God expressly commands, ^w *Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake*; and again, ^x *Let all Things be done decently and according*

^u Sine Episcopatu vel Clericatu salvi esse possumus, sine Christianâ vero Religione non possumus. *Contra Crescon. lib. ii. c. 11.*

^w 1 Pet. ii. 13. ^x 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

according to Order, [κατὰ τάξιν] i. e. according to such Ordinance and Laws of those Men, to whom God hath committed the Rule and Authority over us. Now none can be ignorant, what *Form of Church Government* is settled in this Nation, and what *Order of Men* is appointed to administer the same in this Church of *England*. It is evident to all, that *her* Governors in Spiritual Things, are the *Bishops and the Clergy*. In other national Churches, their Form of Government may perhaps differ somewhat from ours; but if that Difference be not essential, that is, affects not the *Nature* or very *Being* of a Church, which all true Churches derive from the Catholick Church (for she is the Mother of us all), it ought no more to breed Dissention or Disputes, than the different Faces or Modes, which appear in the Children of the same Parent. We may say of them, and of our own Church, that they are Sisters; *alike*, tho' not the *same*: As the Poet speaks,

— *Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum.*

Altho' no Two appear exact the same,
None differ more than Sisters well became.

We may conclude then, and, I hope, you are thoroughly satisfied, That the external Polity and Frame of our Church, is not only a plain and most evident *Mark*, by which we may find her; but that she, and she *only*, having a *Legal* Establishment in this Nation, is intitled to the Homage, Subjection, and Obedience of all that live under the Laws and Government of *England*. And yet you cannot but observe the unaccountable and preposterous Behaviour of those, who reject her Communion and Authority. Thro' Prejudice, or a wilful Ignorance, they overlook the true *Marks*,
and

and those *visible* Evidences of the Church, which I have been setting before you; yea, they seem to take Pains to blind Peoples Eyes and their own, that they may not see them; and call us off to those Signs and Tokens, which are absolutely *invisible*, and therefore not only most uncertain, but impossible to be seen. For such are all those *Marks* they so confidently recommend, of *Faith* and *Assurance*, *Predestination* and *Election*, *internal Sensations* and *secret Impulses of the Spirit*, *Perfection* and *final Perseverance*; which are mere Opinions only, and may, or may not, be held with Innocence, so we break not the Peace and Unity of the Church, and common Charity. But these being the Arguments, which you say have been urged to seduce you from the Communion of the Church, I come now to consider those Points, if you have nothing to object to what has been said.

Tim. Sir, I must own, what you have said carries so strong an Appearance of Truth, that no Objection occurs at present. And I will not deny, but that I have paid too little regard to these distinguishing Marks and Principles of the Church of *England*, having never studied or considered them before in the manner you seem to recommend; for which Reason I have but a superficial Knowledge of them; and am now convinced this is the true Cause why I have been too easily shaken, and so ready to give up the Cause of our poor Church. But as you have spoken in too general Terms, I must intreat you to be somewhat more particular. Howbeit, to shorten your Trouble, I shall only request you a little more fully to explain to me one Point, which you call the *Charter* of the Church, that is, the Baptismal Vow, or Second Covenant, which we enter into in our Baptism; because, I confess, it has been my Unhappiness to meet with little or no Instruction herein, either from Books,

or the Sermons I hear, so as rightly to understand the Nature and Obligations of it. And if this be made to appear so essential as you say, to our Union and Communion with Christ and his Church, I shall easily apprehend the Necessity of *continuing* in that holy Fellowship; and the Danger my Soul must incur by *forsaking* it, and falling into the Sin of *Schism*; which, in that case, can be, in effect, no less than Apostasy from the Church, and forfeiting all the Benefits and Privileges of our holy Charter.

Patro. I will endeavour, by God's Blessing, to give you as clear and full an Answer as I can, consistently with our intended Brevity. But, in the first Place, permit me to ask a Question or two, as necessarily previous to the Subject we are upon.

1. Do you believe *Original Sin*? that is, Have you so considered the general State of Guilt and Corruption, which all Mankind fell into by the Breach of the *First* Covenant, as to believe, that you were conceived and born in Sin; and therefore stand in need of a *Second*; that is, of a Reconcilement to God, upon *new* Terms?

Tim. Yes: The Scriptures say, and I therefore believe it, That we are all born in Sin, and, by Nature, the Children of Wrath: Our first Parents, by transgressing the Divine Law, which was a Law of Perfection, and unfinning Obedience, forfeited, both for themselves, and their Posterity, the Grace and Holy Spirit of God; and thereby lapsing not only into a State of Nature, but of Rebellion and Guilt (the Penalty whereof was Death), it became impossible for us to make a sufficient Atonement to Divine Justice for our Default; much less, by our own Strength, to recover what, in our best Estate, we had not been able to keep; and be restored to that Innocence we had lost, and the consequent Favour of Almighty God; and therefore

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stood in absolute need of coming to *new Terms* with our offended Sovereign, and consequently of an Advocate in Heaven to mediate a Reconcilement, and obtain an Act of Grace, on such Terms as should be acceptable to God; and this, I presume, you mean by the *Second Covenant*.

Patro. You have answered right. And it necessarily follows, that from this natural Impotence of Man, to retrieve the Loss he had sustain'd by his Fall, and to expiate the Guilt he had contracted by Sin, flow'd the Necessity of a Mediator; One, who was both willing and able to satisfy Divine Justice for the Offence committed, and procure *again* the Holy Spirit, to enable us to perform our Duty for the future; in such a manner, at least, as our present imperfect Condition was capable of; and which would be accepted of God, not now for our own Works or Merits, but for the Sake and Merits of Christ. Now this Treaty of Peace and Reconcilement between God and Man was founded, as all Treaties are, on certain Conditions. First, we are to conceive, that, the Divine Omniscience foreseeing the Fall of Man, the Son of God, as the Person not *immediately* offended against, intercedes for him; then undertakes the Office of Mediator and Advocate; and promises, in due time, to take upon him the Nature of Man, and die in his stead; so pay the Debt, and make Atonement for his Sin. This was the Condition, on Christ's Part, in behalf of lost Mankind; and the Effect of it (which in Scripture-Language is usually call'd *Justification*) immediately took place in the purpose of God and his Good-will towards Man, even before the Creation of the World; for which Reason, Christ is call'd ¹ *the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*: And again, ² *that God hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World*: And

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¹ Rev. xiii. 8.² Eph. i. 4.

again more plainly, * *God hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began.* The Condition, on the Part of God the Father, was this; that he would restore to Man, thus justified by the Sufferings and all-sufficient Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, the Gift of his Holy Spirit, as the Earnest of the purchased Inheritance, and Pledge of his Love and gracious Favour; for which Reason, the Holy Ghost is call'd, ^b *the Promise of the Father.* This, I say, and with humble Reverence I speak it, was the Engagement between God and Christ; and, according to the Divine Œconomy, with respect to fallen Man, is the Foundation of what we call the *Second Covenant.* This Heavenly Treaty, this Divine Decree, so agreed to, so fore-ordain'd even before the World began, yea, from Eternity, by which God purposed to bring to Salvation all that should believe in Christ, and take hold of this Covenant (which, by the way, is the true Sense and Meaning of the Scriptural Predestination), our Lord, who is the Mediator of it, came in the Fulness of Time, to reveal, and preach the glad Tidings of Salvation to all Mankind; first in his own Person, then by his Apostles, and still by his Ministers, as the only Expedient for delivering us from the Wrath to come. All, therefore, that would be saved, are required to take hold of, and enter into *this* Covenant; this *better* Covenant, as it may well be called with respect to Man, because founded on better and more practicable Terms; not now of *Works*, or a *perfect and sinless Obedience*), which is become *impossible*, in our present imperfect State), but of Repentance and Faith, and our sincere Endeavours: *Better*, not as it disannuls the *first* Covenant, but as a remedial Law

* 2 Tim. i. 9.

^b Acts i. 4.

Law or Instrument superadded thereto. For, certain it is, that the *First* stands still in Force against all that accept not the Benefits, or neglect to comply with the Terms and Conditions, of the *Second*. Christ, then, as Mediator of this better Covenant, having procured it by his Intercession with God the Father, descended from Heaven, and took on him our Nature, in order to mediate also with Man; not only promulging this divine Act of Grace, but inviting, yea, beseeching, us to be reconciled to God; yea, that he might remove all Impediment on the Part of God, he laid down his own Life to propitiate the divine Justice; and to the end he might obviate all Pretence of Difficulty on the Part of Man, he not only instructed us in the whole Will of God, but gives the Holy Spirit to all that accede to this Treaty of Peace, to *enable* them to perform it. And this the blessed Spirit doth, by enlightning our Understanding, rectifying our Will, and assisting our Endeavours. Yea, we may add, That Christ, by uniting the two Natures, the Human and Divine, in his own Person, hath not only given us a Specimen or Representation of our Re-union and Reconcilement to God, but an undoubted Evidence and Proof of the divine Favour, to encourage our Hope, and strengthen our Faith, that we are, or may be, so Re-united and so Reconciled, on the Terms of this Covenant which he proposes to us, if it be not our own Fault. To confirm it still the more, he instituted the Sacrament of Baptism, as a visible Pledge to *assure* us thereof; as well as to be an Instrument, first, to cleanse us from the Guilt of Original Sin, and thereby fit us for the Reception of the Holy Spirit, and Admission into his mystical Body the Church; next, to convey and seal to us the Privileges and Benefits of the Covenant he hath obtain'd for us. So that by this Laver,
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this *°* *Fountain which he hath opened for Sin and Uncleanneſs*, the Believer, on his Vow to renounce the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil (that is, *Repentance*), is waſhed, made a Member of Chriſt, and reconciled to God ; on the Profeſſion of his Faith in Chriſt, and his Union with him, he is Adopted, yea, Regenerated, and becomes the Child of God ; on his Promise to love and ſerve God by a ſincere Obedience, he is ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, which he then receives, and qualified to be an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. This, doubtleſs, St. *Paul* had an Eye to, when he ſaid to his *Corinthian* Converts who had ſo Believed, ſo Repented of their former Sins, and enter'd into this holy Covenant ; *°* *Such were ſome of You ; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Thus have I given you the Sum and Subſtance of that glorious Covenant, which Chriſt firſt obtain'd of the Father on our behalf ; which he hath executed in his own Perſon ; which he propounds and offers to Man in his Goſpel, as the only Means and Condition of Pardon and Salvation ; which he made with *Adam* immediately after his Fall ; and, in him, tender'd it to all Mankind who ſhould be willing to receive it.

Tim. But, How are we ſure, that the Church of *England*, and her Members, are included in this Covenant, and intitled to the divine Privileges we have been ſpeaking of?

Patro. There can be no Reason to doubt of this, if you conſult, and attentively conſider, what I have call'd her own *Writings*, and particularly the Summary of her Principles, in her ſhort, but excellent *Catechiſm* ; which is therefore excellent, be-
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° Zech. xiii. 1.

° 1 Cor. vi. 11.

cause it contains nothing but the undoubted *Essentials*, and most acknowledged *Fundamentals* of the Christian Religion. The very first Principle she there begins with, as the Foundation of her Interest in Christ, and consequently of her Unity with the Catholic, *i. e.* the whole Christian Church, is that very Covenant of Grace, which, as we have said, contains the Terms and Conditions of our Peace and Reconciliation with God; and this you will easily observe, by comparing it with what I have said. The Instrument likewise, whereby this Covenant is made and seal'd, is the same in our Church, as in the Catholick, namely, *Baptism*. But as there must, in the very Nature of all Covenants, be *Two Contracting Parties*; so it is in our Baptismal Covenant; God is one of the Parties, the Person to be baptized is the other. But whereas God, altho' present, is invisible; and whereas the Child, tho' present and visible, is yet unable to answer for itself, and to declare its Assent to, and Acceptance of, the Sacred Covenant; what Provision has the Church made in that Case, that it may be *legally Executed, Perfected, and Confirm'd*? Why, the Mediator (our Blessed Lord and Saviour) has made a wise and sufficient Provision for a due Execution of the Heavenly Deed, that it may be binding and effectual on *both Sides* (*For he is not a Mediator of One*): He, by virtue of his Office, and the Power committed to him by the Father, as mediating for God, has appointed and ordained an Order of Men in his Church, to whom he hath committed the Ministry of Reconciliation. These he deposes as Substitutes and Representatives to us in God's Name: and by virtue of this Commission, the Minister tenders the Covenant of Peace, on the stipulated Terms of Repentance, Faith, and Obedience.

dience. [See the Office of Baptism, and the Interrogatories there put to the Candidate.] Then, on *the Answer of a good Conscience*, made to those Interrogatories, he proceeds to execute the Sacred Deed of Incorporation, by the instituted Sign of Water and the Word; and at the same time declares his Commission, saying, I BAPTIZE *thee* IN THE NAME, &c. Then Signs the gracious Act with an Authoritative A M E N (which by the way is to be pronounced by the *Minister*, tho' not so generally understood, rather than by the Clerk). And, lastly, he seals it with the *Seal of Christ*, by making the salutary Sign of the Cross on the Forehead of the Child. Thus, I say, the Covenant, on God's Part, is Perfected, Sign'd and Seal'd, by the Minister of Christ, whom he has specially appointed and authorized to officiate in his stead. As to the Child, who is the other Party, but, through a natural Incapacity, and by reason of its tender Age, is unable to declare its Assent, or make the proper Responses, and accept the Terms required (which is an Act essentially necessary to the Form and Validity of the Covenant proposed and exhibited); the Church in this Case, in her great Wisdom and Care, provides that proper Persons shall appear and answer for it: These she calls *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, as they are Instruments of and with God, and so *spiritual* Parents, in the great Work of Regeneration and new Birth: She calls them also *Witnesses*, as they are Evidences to the Covenant made; *Sureties* also and *Sponsors*, not only as they engage for the Child's Instruction in the Nature and Obligations of the solemn Vow and Covenant, which the Infant makes by them; but more especially they are its Representatives in acceding thereto, and executing its Part. And seeing the Engagement is *reciprocal*, and *both* Parties are obliged to execute, and bind them-

themselves to the Terms respectively covenanted, is it not equally reasonable and fit, that the Child should be admitted to act by *his* Representatives, for the Reason above-mention'd, as that God is pleas'd to act by *his*? This I say, to obviate that trifling Objection against the Use of Godfathers and Godmothers. And now I hope I have, in some measure, explain'd to you the Nature and Necessity of the Baptismal Covenant, which I call'd the *Charter* of our Salvation; and that from hence you will draw this Conclusion, that you safely *may*, and in Conscience *ought* to continue in Communion and Fellowship with the Church of *England*, as a truly Catholick, truly Christian Church.

And thus having secured our Foundation, I presume you will call upon me to clear some of her *Doctrines* from the Objections, which are made thereto by our *Methodists*, and which you tell me have so much stagger'd you. Pray, What is your First?

Tim. The Doctrine of *Regeneration* and the *New Birth*.

Patro. Pray, What do they tell you is to be understood by *Regeneration* and the *New Birth*?

Tim. A thorough, hearty, and serious Reformation of Life and Manners; a Conversion to God; a feeling Sense and internal Conviction of God's Spirit, bearing Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God: and a great deal more to the same Purpose; which they endeavour to exemplify, and boast of, in the Conversion of great Numbers.

Patro. These are plausible Topicks, and, if rightly understood and properly applied, might be of great Service to the Christian Religion: But in the manner they are urged by these unskilful Teachers, they do a great deal of Mischief to the Peace of the Church, and the Souls of poor ignorant People. But are not these good things, according to

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their *true Meaning*, to be found in the Church as well as with them? And may we not also say, *Are they Hebrews? So are we. Are they Israelites? So are we.* But they misapply the Term of *Regeneration*, as they do almost all the other Terms in Divinity. And hence arise their Mistakes; as, indeed, almost all the Errors and Contentions about Religion proceed from mistaking or misapplying the *Terms* used by the Church in the Systems of Theology. It is not enough considered, That the Christian Religion is a *Science*, as well as a matter of Duty. Hence the Apostles so often style it, our *Calling*, our *Vocation*, a *Profession*, and the *Way of Truth*. Now rightly to learn and understand this heavenly Calling and Profession, is the first Thing necessary, before we can effectually apply ourselves to the practic Part or Duties of it. That is, we must study and be well instructed in the *Science* of our Religion, before we can perform what it enjoins. Now all Arts and Sciences have their Technical and proper *Terms*: To know and understand *these*, is the first Business of every Learner; because, without this Knowledge in every Art and Science, 'tis impossible to avoid Confusion; much less can any Person be capable of teaching Others, who knows not the Distinction between one Term and another; or who mistakes or miscals one by the Name of another.

This egregious Blunder (as we should esteem it in every *Secular* Profession or Science) is the main Cause of this Contention, and those vain Janglings, which the *Methodists* have raised against the Church, about *Regeneration*, &c. She evidently and earnestly presses the Necessity of Regeneration, but it is according to the *true* and *genuine* Sense of the Doctrine; that is to say, as it is the Effect and immediate Consequence of lawful Baptism; and therefore she preaches it only to those who are *Unbaptized*.

tized. And herein she perfectly agrees with the Scriptures, and the Writings of the Primitive Church; as is obvious to all that read them with any Attention. Hence the Apostle calls Baptism the *Laver of Regeneration*; and where-ever the Word *Regenerate* occurs in any of the Fathers, it constantly imports a Person *Baptized*: But it is never used to signify a Person *Converted*, or reformed from a bad Life, or any Habits of Sin.—'Tis evident, the Church, in her Office of Baptism, and other Places, applies the Term to *Infants*: And can it be supposed that Infants have been guilty of any *actual* Sin or Immoralities, *before* they are Baptized, of which they are bound to Repent and be Reform'd? It must needs then be very absurd and irrational to suppose that *Regeneration* and *Conversion* mean the same thing. To be *Regenerated* and *Born again* implies a *State*, not a *Duty*; is a Gift and Privilege of God annexed to Christian Baptism, and not properly an Act of Ours, any more than our Natural Birth. As Children by Nature, and as Children of Grace, we concur to either State, in our Infancy, not *actively* but *passively*. 'Tis a Blessing we *receive*, not a Duty we *perform*, nor indeed is it in our *Power* to perform; and therefore cannot be an Act of Duty. We can no more contribute to our *Second* and *Spiritual* Birth in our Infancy, than we can *naturally* Beget our selves, and bring our selves into the World. The very Words of Christ, on which the Doctrine of *Regeneration* is founded, imply this very plainly; especially if we render the Words, not *Born again*, but, as they well may be, *Born from above*, for so the Word *ἄνωθεν* does properly signify; and is certainly so used in the same Chap. ver. 31.

Now, when a Man is thus *born of Water and the Holy Ghost*, that is, Begotten and Born of God in Christian Baptism, he is certainly born for his

whole Term. It is as absurd to imagine he can have *another* Spiritual Birth, after he is once enter'd into the Church, as it would be to say, we must enter into our Mother's Womb *again*, and be born of our Parents a *second Time*. Herein Nature and Grace bear a perfect Analogy the one to the other, as indeed they do in many other Instances, as is very evident by our Saviour's Parables, which are all founded on the Similitude there lies between Natural and Spiritual Things. If, then, it be an Insult upon common Sense, to say a Man may be born again of his *natural* Parent, 'tis certainly no less absurd to maintain, that we are, or can be, born again of our Spiritual Mother the Church, after we have been once *regenerated* and born anew in Baptism. And what puts the matter out of all Dispute, is, that *Water*, in Conjunction with the Holy Spirit, is made One of the Requisites of the New Birth. And thus having proved the Abuse and Impropriety of the Doctrine of Regeneration, as taught by *Calvinistical* Divines, and by our poor deluded *Methodists*, who follow them, and use *their* Language, not their Mother Tongue, the Language of the Church; I hope you are convinced, that their Objection against the Church of *England*, on this Head, is groundless and false, arising from a mistaken Sense of the Term, and therefore from Ignorance, and not from Reason. I know some of her own Doctors have run into the same Mistake in their Writings and Sermons; but I appeal from them to *her own* Records, for the Sense and Meaning, in which she takes the Doctrine of *Regeneration*, and which *she*, as the fittest Interpreter of her own Meaning, recommends to her Members.

Tim. Sir, you have convinced me, that the Objectors Opinion is wrong in this Point; and that the Charge of Error lies more justly against them, than

than against our Church. — But pray what say you to that *Assurance* they so much boast of?

Patro. Here again, like Men in the Dark, they mistake one thing for another. — *Assurance*, is doubtless, a Christian Doctrine, and indeed one of the most comfortable Doctrines in Christianity : But they do not consider there are *Two Kinds* of Assurance; and the Error lies in Confounding the One with the Other. One respects our *Present State*; the other refers to our *Future*. The first is the Assurance of *Faith*, by which we are, and ought to be assured, that we *are* Christians, and within the Covenant of Grace : The other is such an Assurance, as none can have but by Revelation, as *Daniel* and *St. Paul*, and some other holy Persons have had, of the *Certainty of their Salvation*. And yet, this, tho' reveal'd to very few, and perhaps not necessary nor safe for common Christians to have, is the *Assurance* that these People boast so much of, and so confidently promise to their deluded Followers. But as to the *first* Kind of Assurance, which I say is *necessary* to have, look back on your Baptismal Vow ; and there you will learn all that is proper for a Christian to be assured of. You cannot but observe, that it is, like all other Covenants, made up of Conditions : And if you have duly enter'd into it, you may be most certainly assured, that you are in a *State of Salvation*, because you are in the Church ; as *Noah* and his Children were assured of Safety, when they were in the *Ark*. And if you faithfully keep *your* Part of the Promises then made, you may be assured, that God will not fail of his Promise ; which was, as we have said, to Regenerate and Adopt you for his Child, to admit you into his Church here, and hereafter to give you an Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven. Firmly to Believe these Things, as contain'd and promised in the Covenant, is the proper *Assurance of FAITH* :
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To have the Testimony of a good Conscience, that you sincerely perform the Conditions, is as properly call'd by St. *Paul*, the *Affurance of HOPE*, and by St. *John*, a *Confidence towards GOD*. And this I will be bold to say, is all that becomes a Christian's Duty to be *Affured* of.—To go further than this, and to presume on an infallible Certainty of Salvation, is so far from being a Duty, that it is rather a Temptation to Spiritual Pride and Presumption; and therefore a Snare and Delusion of the Enemy, to betray us into a fatal Security; and even to take us off from those necessary Duties, which alone can qualify us for the Possession of our promised Inheritance. And why? Because it necessarily implies a Confidence in *our own Strength*, that we shall never do any thing to forfeit our Right, and fall away. And yet, this second Kind of Assurance seems the only one these Men feed themselves and their Followers with the Conceit of. The first, which is a firm Trust and Reliance on GOD's Faithfulness, tho' of the highest Importance; yea, the one Thing needful in our present State; they quite overlook, and make no Account of: the other (which is no better than Self-sufficiency) they tenaciously hold and contend for; yea, some are so blinded, that they expressly deny * the very *Covenant*, by which alone we can be assuredly intitled to Peace with GOD, and the Hopes of Glory.

Tim. I cannot but own your Distinction is very right; and that this last Kind of Assurance was the Thing that struck my Fancy most; being told, that, by joining with these People, I should attain to a *Certainty of my Salvation*. This they promised with all imaginable Confidence, and talk'd so much of the Sweetness they taste in this Assurance, that I own it affected me much, and made me very uneasy

* *Whitefield* denies it absolutely, that any Second Covenant was ever made with Mankind.

uneasy with my present Situation as to the Church; which I never heard give any such Encouragements, or tickle our Ears with such soothing Doctrines.

Patro. I am very glad you never did, and hope you never will, hear such Doctrines in the Church of *England*. The first that preach'd them, was the Serpent in Paradise;—*Ye shall be as Gods*, was the fatal Flattery that beguil'd our first Parents. Happy they were! as happy as Innocence and Paradise could make them! but *Satan* put it in their Head, there was still something wanting, to complete their Happiness; that it was not enough to be *as Men*, but they must be *as Gods*.—Is not this the very Case with you? You are as yet in the *Eden* of Gods Church; you are within that Act of Grace, by which our lost Innocency is restored; you are assured, that if you continue herein to your Life's End, you shall then receive the Crown of Glory; but here comes a flattering Tongue, and tells you a fine Story of *Perfection* and *indefectible Grace* attainable in this Life, and I know not what Delights and Pleasures, heavenly Sweets, and ravishing Sensations and Ecstasies of Spirit; that is, in Effect, that you may gain the Prize, before you have reach'd the Mark. But observe the Condition, on which you are to purchase these extraordinary Privileges and Sweets: Is it not, that you should forsake the Church, and so give up your Right and Title to all those inestimable Benefits, which Christ has entail'd upon her? Just so the fatal Apple was pleasant to the Eye, and good to eat; but the tasting of it cost *Adam* and *Eve* the Loss of Paradise and Immortality.—Have a care of catching at the Shadow, and losing the Substance.

I shall not contest it with 'em, nor deny that there are Sweets, inexpressible Sweets, which pious and devout Souls do sometimes *taste* and *feel* in the Exercise

ercise of Religious Duties, especially in the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity. But it is a gross Deception, and comes from the Father of Lyes, to say, that these Sweets are not in the Church. He knows the contrary, and maligns the unspeakable Joy, which a good Christian feels, when the Love of God is shed abroad in his Heart. Believe me, Sir, the sincere Milk and Honey of the Gospel, and all those Sweetnesses we are speaking of, are no-where *else* to be found *genuine* and *true*, but in the Church: '*All my fresh Springs*, says God of his Church, *shall be in thee*. And he that knows her best, and has purchased her with his own Blood, can best tell us, what Sweets there are in her. See *Cant.* iv. And here, by the Way, I cannot forbear owning to you, that formerly when I studied this *Song of Songs*, I was so smitten with the Love of the Church, that I know nothing dearer, nothing sweeter, in this whole World, than to know and be *assured* that I am a Member, of that Part of his Church, which he has planted in this Nation; and to find, on the strictest Examination, that *she* is one of the best and purest upon Earth. But, as a farther Mistake, pray observe, how these Practisers, who seem to ingross all religious Sweetnesses to themselves, do, in fact, invert the Order and Method, in which Christ has set them before us in the Gospel. He places Mourning *first*, and *then* Comfort: But these Men promise nothing *but* Comforts, and exclude Mourning; or rather, in effect, and too truly, leave Mourning to the last.—He tells us of Tribulation in the World, *before* we can be of good Cheer; but they, on the contrary, call us *first* to good Cheer—*Verily, verily*, says Christ, *I say unto you, that Ye shall weep and lament, but the World shall rejoice*. On the contrary, say they, Ye shall rejoice, and the World shall weep and lament.—*Ye shall be sorrowful*, saith Christ, *but Your Sorrow shall*

shall be turned into Joy: Ye shall have all Joy, and no Sorrow, say they. Now the Design of these Scriptures, and many other like Passages, is to teach us, that the first right Step in the spiritual Life is *Repentance*; which, if it be sincere, must and will be attended with Mourning, with Tears, Lamentations, and Sorrow. And, for this Reason, Repentance is the *first Word* of the Gospel; therefore *John the Baptist* was appointed the ^s *Forerunner* of Christ, to call to *Repentance*; yea, Christ's Command to us all is, ^a *Repent, and believe the Gospel*: First repent, and then believe. In like manner *St. Paul* tells us, the Order of his Doctrine was, *Repentance towards God*, and *Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. So likewise, in his System of the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, he first lays down, as a Foundation, ⁱ *Repentance from dead Works*, and then, *Faith towards God*.—In Conformity to this Scheme of Christian Apostolical Principles, our excellent Church requires of all her Candidates of Baptism, first, to renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, that is, to repent; next, she propounds the Articles of Faith, which she requires us to believe; and then, Obedience. By this Order she seems to teach us, that, without Repentance, there can be no true Faith; and, without a previous Repentance, and true Faith, there can be no right Obedience. This, you see, is the genuine and wise Order of Christ and his Church. But as to these new Teachers, do not you perceive how little this Order is observed by them; how much they dwell, and continually harangue, on *Faith*, and the *Sweets of Believing*; but how slightly, if at all, they insist on *Repentance*, and Sorrow for Sin? Then, as to *Obedience*, they have cut the very Sinews of it, by denying the Necessity of *good Works*, which are the proper *Acts* of Obedience.

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Tim:

^s Mat. iii. 1.^a Mar. i. 15.ⁱ Heb. vi. 1.

Tim. Sir, you have, by God's Blessing, opened my Eyes, to see the unhappy Prejudice and deplorable Errors of these Men, and consequently the Danger I have been in of forsaking the Truth. I now begin to see, not only the Necessity of a deep and unfeigned *Repentance*, as the first *regular* Step in Religion, and especially for my own Sin of making so light of our holy Church; but am convinced, that this Repentance must be continued throughout our whole Lives, because ^k *in many Things we offend all*. And if an Apostle include *himself* in such an humble Confession, saying, *we offend*, I as well as you, even *all of us* offend, what a monstrous Piece of Pride must it be, in any Man whatsoever, to pretend to a State of *sinless* Perfection, while we carry this Body of Sin and Death about us! Yea, I now see, the *better* any Man is, that is, the more *sincerely he repents of his Sins*, so much the more Light he will receive from Faith, to see more and more Abominations in his Heart. This will make his Humiliation still the deeper, and bring him, with the holy *Job*, to *abhor himself*, and to *repent in Dust and Ashes*.

But then, I trust, that the Light of Faith, which shews our Corruptions, and gives us so pungent a Sense of their Turpitude, will at the same time let in upon us the Light of God's gracious Countenance, and give still a clearer Sight of his Love in Christ, and the unspeakable Riches of his Goodness and Mercy. I shall now make no Hesitation to apply to our dear Mother the Church of *England* all the Perfections, which, in the *Canticles*, are applied to the Spouse of Christ.

Patro. Sir, I rejoice greatly, and find my Heart more united to you than ever, on seeing your Love to the Church revived: So that I cannot but apply to you, what *St. Ambrose* said of the good Emperor *Theodosius*—" I love the Man, because he loved

^k *St. James* iii. 2.

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“ the Church.” To stir up your pure Mind the more to the Love of the Church, I recommend to your Perusal the excellent Tract of St. *Cyprian* on the *Unity of the Church*. And I would to God that Discourse were, at this time, made more public in our Mother-tongue*, and in the Hands of every Member of our Church; nothing being more generally neglected, or less considered, than the Nature and Necessity of *Church Union*, though one of the greatest and most valuable Blessings on this Side Heaven; and I cannot but repeat it again, that I am persuaded, there is not, upon Earth, a more excellent, more pure and Orthodox Church, than that which by Law is established in this Nation. Take her, I say, in herself (as I said before), and view her in her own native Beauty, she will be found ¹ *a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy, and without Blemish*.—Nor can there happen a sorer Judgment on any of her Members, than to fall away from her. It is a Sign they never knew her, or understood their own Happiness, or eternal Interest, who forsake her Communion. It is, therefore, a just Punishment of God, to cut them off from his People, for their Contempt of so great a Mercy; and suffer them, as he did the *Jews* of old, to be scattered, and led captive, by their Enemies, into strange Lands; that is, to be carried away into wild Errors, and extravagant Delusions, by crafty Men, who lie in wait to deceive. Or may we not say with St. *John*? *They went out from us, but they were not of us: For if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be made manifest, that they were not all of us*, 1 Ep. Ch. ii. 19.

Tim. But there is one Charge more, which I desire may be clear'd up; namely, that her Ministers teach nothing but *Works*, contrary to St. *Paul's*

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Doctrine,

* See the Translation, in St. *Cyprian's* Works, in *English*, by Dr. *Marshall*.

¹ *Eph.* v. 27.

Doctrine, “ that we are not saved by Works, but
“ by Faith in Jesus Christ.”

Patro. This were a *Spot* indeed, if true; but it is only a *Speck* of *Dirt* thrown upon her, by the Ignorance of those, who know her not, nor the Things whereof they affirm; and may easily be wiped off. For here again they mistake and confound one Thing with another: They do not attend to the Distinction, which *St. Paul* himself most evidently makes between the Works of the *Law*, and the Works of the *Gospel*, between *Jewish* and *Christian* Works. He saith, indeed, *A Man is not justified by the Works of the Law*, Gal. ii. 16. but he saith also, *This is a faithful Saying, and these Things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they, which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works: These Things are good and profitable unto Men*, Tit. iii. 8. Here we see as plain a Distinction between the Legal and Evangelical Works, as Words can express. And therefore they, who understand aright the Apostle’s Sense, draw this just Inference, from all that he any-where saith about *Works*, “ That no Man is justified or acquitted from Sin “ by the Works of the *first* Covenant (of which the “ Law of *Moses* was the Pattern or Specimen), but “ by the *Works* of the *second* Covenant (whereof the “ Gospel is the Plan), as it is now fully unfolded and “ brought to Light by *Jesus Christ*.” They likewise observe, that, by the wise Providence of God, the Scriptures are therefore so divided, as they are, into Two Volumes, or Parts; the first whereof, containing chiefly the Substance of the *First* Covenant, and insisting so much upon *Works*, is therefore called [*ἡ Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη*] the *Old Testament*, or rather the *Old Covenant*; the other Volume containing the Substance of the *Second* Covenant, which is the Covenant of Grace and Faith made with us in Christ, is called [*ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη*] the *New Covenant*, as was observed before, p. 8. But

But then you may say, that even *Christian Works*, even the Works of the *Gospel*, or Second Covenant, do not *save* us. For we read in *Eph. ii. 8, 9. By Grace ye are saved, through Faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the Gift of God; NOT OF WORKS, lest any Man should boast.*— This I grant, and am sure our Church grants, and every-where teaches the same; to wit, That Works *alone*, be they never so good, will not save us: That they are not accepted of God, as done by Us (*as of ourselves*), but *thro' Faith*, that is, for the sake of Christ's Merits, in whom we believe. So she expressly affirms in her XIth Art. “ We are accounted righteous before God, only for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by Faith, and *not for our own Works*, or Deservings, &c.” But then, that she does not look upon good Works as *unnecessary* to Salvation (which is an Extreme, I hear, some of your Methodists run into), pray read what she holds concerning them in Art. the XIIth. This may be sufficient to convince you of the Injustice of this Objection against our Church. It is manifest she instructs us in the Doctrine both of Faith *and* Works: She separates not the one from the other: She only specifies the due Weight, and intrinsic Value, which either of them holds in the Scale of Grace; being well aware, that *A false Balance is Abomination to the Lord, but a just Weight is his Delight.* She considers *Faith* as the Life and Soul of good Works, and *good Works* as the Body and external Evidence of Faith; or, as her Article above-mentioned expresses it, she looks on Faith as the *Tree*, and good Works as the *Fruits* thereof. So that as the Tree is known by its Fruits, so these Fruits could never be produced without the Tree. But, alas! though these Things are obvious and plain, and the undoubted Doctrines of our Church, as well as of the Scriptures, it is a lamentable

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Case, that these Men, who make the Objection, and raise this Clamour, have not Eyes or Ingenuity enough to see or own their Mistake. And whence does the Mistake arise, that gives Birth to these injurious Revilings against the Church and her Ministers, but from the same Fountain, whence (as I have before observed) all their other Errors flow, namely, from a most pitiable Ignorance of the *Baptismal Vow*? Had they ever considered *that* with any Attention, their Catechism would have taught them, That the *Works*, which the Church and her Ministers recommend and preach, are no other than those very Acts of Obedience, which we all *promised* in our holy Covenant, and are all bound by our solemn Vow to *perform*: That, whatsoever Distinctions are to be made between the *Nature* or *Efficacy* of Faith and Works, our Obligation is equal as to the Observance of *both*; being no other than two distinct Parts of the *same* Covenant, two Conditions bound upon us by our Lord and Master, as necessary, *unitedly* necessary, to Salvation. To separate them, therefore, or to set up one in Opposition to the other (as these Men do, by crying up *Faith* as the *only* Condition of Salvation, and denying *Works*), is a plain Violence offered to God's holy Covenant, and putting that asunder, which he hath joined together: But to say, that our Church preaches up *Works only*, and omits Faith, is a most unjust Imputation, which their Ignorance has raised, but cannot excuse.

Tim. Pray, Sir, are not these Men reviving the old Heresy of the *Solifidians* and *Antinomians*, who, in the last Century, held, that "Salvation was attainable by Faith alone, exclusive of all Law?" — Whereas, methinks, the prudent Distinction, which the Church has made, might easily have satisfied any reasonable Person; to wit, that tho' it be true, we are justified by FAITH *alone*, yet it
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is by such a Faith as is *not* ALONE (*sola fide, sed non quæ est sola*), i. e. not so alone, as to be *without Works*. And I now call to mind what I have heard, and see good Reason to believe, that it was to oppose this Opinion, that so many Books came out in those Days, on the Subject of *good Works*, by the Writers of our Church; and in particular that well-known Book the *Whole Duty of Man*, which I shall now have a greater Value for, than ever I had; though these People speak so slightly of it; yea, *because* they do so.

Patro. You judge right. These poor deluded Methodists, who have indeed a great Zeal, but without Knowledge, are falling into the very same Error with the *Solifidians*. The Enemy of Souls has found no better Engine wherewith to oppose Christianity, and batter the Walls of our *Jerusalem*, than this of setting Faith against Works, and Works against Faith. In the *Roman Church* he has effected the *latter*, by extolling the *Merit* of Works: Amongst these *Solifidians* and *Antinomians* he has as unhappily effected the *other*, by magnifying Faith *above* Works, and setting the *Creed* against the *Commandments*. This Stratagem he began very early with; even in the Apostles Times he had the Address to delude many. *St. Paul*, by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, undertook more professedly to answer the *first* Question, which we commonly call *Justification by Faith*; *St. James*, by the Influence of the same Holy Spirit, sets himself as professedly to answer the *other* concerning the *Justification by Works*. Now *St. Paul*, having to do with *unbelieving Jews*, and likewise with *Jewish* and *Gentile Converts*, insists warmly, in his Disputation with the first, on the Necessity of *Faith in Christ*, in Opposition to their *Law of Works*, meaning (as we have said before) the *Works of the FIRST Covenant*, that being the Ground, and primary End and Intent, of the Law of

of *Moses*, which the Apostle, for that Reason, so often calls the *Law of Works*, in Contradistinction to the Law of Christ. And by the Works of the Law he constantly means the Works of that Law, or *First Covenant*, in Opposition to the Law of the Gospel, or *Second Covenant*, the Works of which he every-where calls *good Works*. But, in his Argument with Believers, though he exhort them to the *maintaining good Works*, that is to say, *the Works of the SECOND Covenant, Evangelical or Christian Works*, he nevertheless guards them against placing any *Merit* in them, or imputing that Justification, or Remission of Sins, to *them*, which he constantly ascribes to *Faith*, that is, to Christ, and *his Merits*. —But St. *James*, writing to *Believers* only (as appears by his addressing them by the Style and Appellation of *Brethren*, see Ch. i. V. 2. 9. 16. Ch. ii. V. 1. 5. 14. Ch. iii. V. 1. Ch. iv. V. 11. Ch. v. V. 7. 12. 19.), insists as warmly on the Necessity of *Works* (meaning, undoubtedly, *Christian, Evangelical Works*), as well as the Necessity of *Christian Faith*; and expressly asserts, that *Faith* itself, even Christian Faith, without Christian Obedience, is *dead*, and therefore ineffectual to eternal Life and Salvation. So that whoever compares the two Apostles with Ingenuity and Attention, will find no Difference at all between them, except what necessarily arises from the Difference of the Question, and the Scope and Design of the Argument. Both of them agree in the Necessity of *Good Works*, as well as of *Faith*, and of Faith as well as good Works; because they are equally constituent Parts of our Baptismal Vow. Both agree likewise in the *Order*, in which they there lie; *first Faith*, and *then Obedience*: For so St. *Paul* requires Faith, — *working by Love*; and St. *James* calls on us, to shew our Faith, — *by our Works*.

You see, both of them mean the very same Thing, and observe the very same Order. Our Church proceeds

proceeds in strict Conformity herewith ; and this she doth, not only pursuant to the Principles of Revealed Religion, but to the Dictates of right Reason, and the moral Fitness of Things. For as Repentance from dead Works prepares us *for* Faith and the spiritual Life ; so Faith, which bestows that Life of the Spirit, prepares and enables us *for* good Works, which are the lively and genuine Fruits of the Spirit. I might also observe to you the awful Mystery that lies couched in this *Order* of our threefold Vow ; first, as it respects the Blessed Trinity ; Repentance refers to God the Father, Faith to God the Son, and Obedience to God the Holy Ghost. Secondly, as it refers also to us Men, and to the Disorder we contracted by our Fall ; namely, of Guilt in the Conscience, Blindness in our Understanding, and Perverseness in the Will. Here again the Order is exactly correspondent to our Case. Repentance is the proper Cure for the *first*, Faith the Remedy of the *second*, and Obedience of the *last*. If this be so, as I am verily persuaded it is, being built on undoubted Authority of Scripture, though not commonly attended to ; it must then follow, that whosoever takes away any *one* Article of our triple Vow, or even inverts the *Order*, in which God and his Church have placed and propounded them to us, does in effect both violate the Mystery and Order of the Sacred Trinity ; and, at the same time, render our Covenant ineffectual to the great End for which it was designed, to wit, the Health and Salvation of our Souls. To break one Part of this threefold Cord is indeed a Breach of the Whole, and so incurs the complicated Guilt mentioned by St. James, — *He that offends in one Point [of this holy Law], is guilty of all* : Or, as our Lord speaks, *He that breaketh one of these least Commandments, and shall teach Men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven*. Nor can this be otherwise, or appear

strange to any considerate Christian; because, according to the Apostles Form of arguing,— he that said, REPENT, said also, BELIEVE; and, he that said, *Believe in God*, said also, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, and *do Good*. But how much more strongly still is this uniform Observance of our *whole* Vow bound upon us, when we reflect, that this Baptismal Promise is no other than the most solemn *Oath* to God; that therefore wilfully to dispense with *any Part* of it, is no less than downright Perjury! This was the holy *David's* Sense of it (to wit, that the Covenant was a most solemn *Oath*), and should be ours, saying with him,— ⁱ *I have SWORN, and am stedfastly purposed, to keep thy righteous Judgments*. And every pious Soul will be often thinking with the Psalmist, and deriving Comfort from the Thought,— ^k *How he SWARE unto the Lord, and VOWED a Vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob*.—But I forget myself; the vast Importance of the Subject has carried me into a greater Length than I designed. To return, then: The Enemy of our Salvation, as I observed before, knowing too well, that the very Essence of Christianity, and Ground of all our Hopes, consists in this second Covenant, began very early to attack it. But then (as we have noted before) the Church had two of the ablest Champions, even two *Apostles*, to defend it. The next Attempt of *Satan* was, by the *Gnostic* Heresy under various Heads, *Simon Magus*, *Carpocrates*, &c. to impugn the *Whole* of our Vow, by resolving all into *Knowledge*, and so excluding *every Part* thereof, even Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. But this *Satanical* Device against the *whole* Covenant breaking out in the Days of *St. Paul*, the holy Apostle combats it in almost all his Epistles ^{*}; and has furnished the Church with Weapons

ⁱ Ps. cxix.

^k Ps. cxxxii.

^{*} See Dr. Hammond's Annot. on the Epistles.

pons sufficient to overthrow the *Gnostic* Heresy. The next Attack of the Enemy was more immediately against a single Branch, even the *first* Part of the *Baptismal Vow*, *Repentance*. To this end he stirred up *Donatus*, *Novatian*, and others; who, under Pretence of *greater Sanctity* than other Christians, denied any Place of Repentance to such as, through the Force of Persecution, or other great Temptation, had fallen into any grievous Sin. This Heresy infested long the Christian Church, and produced the first avowed Schism from her.—So destructive to Unity has *Puritanism* *, and the Conceit of *Perfection*, ever been!—But God was pleased to raise up in his Church many excellent Men to oppose this proud Heresy; and not only to confirm and enforce the *Necessity* of Repentance, but the Certainty of the Divine *Acceptance* of it, if true and sincere; every Christian, though never so great a Sinner, being even bound, by his Covenant and Promise, to believe *this* Article of our Creed, as well as any other, namely, the *Forgiveness of Sins*,—to the penitent Believer. But the Adversary of Souls, not resting here, renewed the Assault; and, taking Advantage of some Expressions, which the Fathers and Writers of the Church had perhaps unguardedly dropped in Praise of *good Works*; and speaking sometimes of the Reward they *merited* (by which they meant no more than the Reward they were *intitled to*, through the Free Grace and Covenanted Promise of God); he introduced, by degrees, the Doctrine of *Merits* and *meritorious Works*, which, like a Leprosy, overspread the whole *Roman Church*; not only puffing up the natural Vanity of Men to overlook the wise Caution of our Lord, that “when we have done all, we are to
 “ think ourselves but unprofitable Servants;” but even to claim a Share with God as Coadjutors, and

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* They were called *Kathari*, i. e. *Puritans*.

joint Authors with him, of our own Salvation. Yea, from a mistaken Sense of the Words [*quodcunque supererogaveris*], which occur in the vulgar Latin Translation of *Luke x.* they improved the vain presumptuous Doctrine of *Merits* into the still more vain and arrogant Opinion of *Supererogation*; that is, a conceited Notion, that we might do, and that some did, *more* for God, than in Strictness of Duty they were bound to do. This, in effect, evacuated every one of the Terms of our threefold Vow, forasmuch as it supersedes all further *Necessity* of Repentance; perverts Faith into a fond Confidence of our own Perfections; and, as to *Obedience*, it turns the Tables upon God, and makes that, which should be a Service, and Act of Duty, to be an Obligation, and even a *Debt* upon him; yea, so large a Debt, by the Fund and Treasure of the *Saints Merits*, as to suffice not only for their own Trespases, but for the Discharge of all the most enormous Debts of the greatest Sinners, if so be they have but Money enough to purchase an Indulgence; or, by a certain Number of Prayers to the Saints, can procure a Share in the Overplus of *their* Merits. Whoever is not blinded with *Popish* Superstition, will easily see the Impiety, as well as Folly, of this Persuasion;—and perceive how *Satan* has deluded that unhappy People into it, on purpose, as I said, to render their Baptismal Vow of none Effect. Now if we compare herewith the Principles and Practice of your *Methodists*, may we not observe the same crafty Wiliness of the Enemy, the same Plot and Conspiracy against our holy Covenant? For what else is their Pretence to *absolute Perfection*, and *indefectible Grace*? their resolving all Religion into *instantaneous Faith*, and Faith itself into *Impulses*, and mere *animal Sensations*, but setting aside all further Necessity of Repentance, and destroying the Nature of Faith, by turning it into an Act of Sense, and
natural

natural Perception?—As to *Obedience*, it is true they vary somewhat from the Papist, but they err more grievously: They claim not any *Merit* or *Supererogation* to their Works, but cast off *all* Works as unnecessary to Salvation; and do not so much *wrest* and *pervert* this Branch of our Vow, as the Papists do; but utterly *destroy* it, and so act directly contrary to our blessed Saviour's Practice, who came not to *destroy* the Law, but to *fulfil* it: Yea, as his Apostle affirms of him, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience¹;” and was himself “made Perfect by the things he suffered^m.”—This Stratagem of the Enemy against the very Essence of *Obedience* (which necessarily consists in *Works*) is the last Effort of his infernal Malice, which he has reserved for these latter Times. All former Attempts were but Approaches, and opening, as it were, the Trenches against the City of our God; in this most degenerate Age he has mustered all his Forces under innumerable Heads, which, however they differ in other Respects, yet are all combined with Heart and Hand against our *Jerusalem*, and cry, “Down with it, down with it, even to the Ground.” The great Business, for which our Saviour came into the World, was to destroy the Works of the Devil; of Course the main Effort of the Devil is to destroy the Works of Christ. For this Reason he is rightly stiled *Antichrist*. He knows, too well, if he can but gain this last Munition and Fortress of our Religion, and render ineffectual our Vow of *Obedience*, our Church must inevitably fall into his Hands, and be destroyed. The very same Stratagem he practised against her about an hundred Years ago, and too successfully effected the Ruin both of our Church and State. But God, who is able to raise the Dead, was pleased to restore her

¹ Heb. v. 8.^m Chap. ii. 10.

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again, and brought back the Captivity of *Zion*. At the same time he stirred up the Spirits of many holy Men of her Communion, who survived that Desolation, and well understood the fatal *Cause* of it, to set themselves, with all their Might, to turn the Minds of People to the Practice of *Moral Duties*, and cure them of that Madness and Enthusiasm, into which they had been led by the contrary Doctrines of *Antinomianism*, during the Times of Anarchy and Confusion in these Kingdoms. To this good End the pious Dr. *Hammond* published his *Practical Catechism*, Bishop *Taylor* his Treatise of *Holy Living and Dying*, Archbishop *Leighton* laboured by his Sermons (which have been published since his Death, and are now, I hear, preparing for the Press again) to reduce Men from those *speculative* Opinions about *Faith*, *Justification*, *Election*, &c. to the *practical* Duties of *Obedience* and *Good Works*.—This was also the Design of that good Book called the *Practice of Piety*, with many others ; but, among all, the Author of the *Whole Duty of Man* has deservedly and most generally been esteemed the best that ever came out on that Subject. It is evident to all unprejudiced Readers, that this was his professed Design : He pretended not to give us a full System of Divinity, but confines himself chiefly to the *Agenda* of Religion, the *practical* Part (which, in Strictness, is to be understood by the Word *DUTY of Man*) ; yet does not wholly omit the *Credenda*, or Matters of Faith : It is plain he every-where takes them in, as far as the Doctrine of Faith served his main Design. 'Tis plain, by his excellent Preface concerning *the Care of the Soul*, that he has raised his whole Superstructure on *that* Foundation : Or, to speak more closely, has taken the *Second Covenant*, which is the Sum and Substance of Christianity, and Epitome of the Gospel, for the Ground-work of that excellent Treatise,

Treatise. But that Part of our Vow, whereby we covenant and promise to perform *Obedience* to the Commands of God, is what he undertook to treat of *particularly*, and has acquitted himself like a skilful Workman. In executing this Design, the Plan he lays down is the very same with that of *St. Paul*, and in the same express Terms,—namely, that we *should live* SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, and GODLY in *this present World*ⁿ. From hence he branches most properly the whole Practice of a Christian into those *Duties* which we owe to *God*, our *Neighbour*, and *ourselves*.—And can this be called *Heathen Doctrine*, as I hear some of the poor *Methodists* call it? Is not the same Doctrine inculcated almost in every Page of the Bible, from one End to the other? Is it not that, whereby the holy Apostle plainly tells us we are to *ADORN the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*? Is it not that, which (as the Apostle goes on) *the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation*, more especially teaches us, that, *denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts* (pursuant to the *first Branch* of our Vow, *Repentance*), we should *live soberly, righteously, and godly*; that is, put in Practice the third Part of our Vow? What then shall we say, or what can we think, of those People who are not afraid to call God's own Word *Heathen Doctrine*! If we pity the *Ignorance*, we cannot but tremble at the *Blasphemy* of these Men, who make no Difference between *the Doctrine of God our Saviour*, and the Doctrine of a Heathen Philosopher. It is true, Heathen Philosophers taught *Moral Virtue*; and many excellent Precepts, and even Examples, are to be found amongst them; but who, that has the least Insight into *Heathen and Christian Morality*, sees not as wide a *Difference* between them, as there is between *Plato, Seneca, &c.* and *Christ and his Apostles*? The Virtues of Heathens, such as *Prudence,*

ⁿ Titus ii. 12.

dence, *Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice*, were true Virtues in their kind ; and, where sincerely practised by *them*, no doubt were accepted of God ; for so St. Peter acknowledges, that *in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him*°. St. Paul owns the same ; see *Rom. ii. 14, 15, 26*. But though *this* Righteousness, or moral Virtue, might save a *Heathen*, it will not save a *Christian*. And the Reason is, because the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, and hath now appeared unto us, requires *Faith in Christ*, not only as an additional Term of Salvation, but as absolutely necessary to all, that have heard the Gospel. Our Virtues, therefore, though of the same kind, are *now* animated, yea, spiritualized, by a higher Principle, than the Heathen ever had, or could have. As the Christian is made a *New Creature* by his Union with Christ by Faith ; so his Virtues are made *New Virtues*, in the same Sense as our Lord calls his Command of Love a *New Commandment*. *Joh. xiii. 34. i. e.* not only renewed, but animated and enlivened by the Divine Energy of the Holy Spirit, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. The Man is the same individual Man, so the Virtues, or moral Actions, continue the same Virtues ; but both are endued with a Higher and more Divine Principle than Nature or natural Reason can bestow. And they are these *Christian* (not *Heathen*) Morals, which *the whole Duty of Man* every where calls upon us to the Practice of ; *these* are the Morals which our Divines preach ; and therefore it is a most slanderous Charge to say, that they do not *preach Christ* in their Pulpits ; whereas, to every sober intelligent Hearer, these Exhortations to *moral Virtue* are the very Sound of the Gospel, the very Voice of Christ, calling us to *work* in his Vineyard. For, as when the Subject of their Sermon is *Repentance*,

° Acts x 35.

then

then are we called to fight manfully against our Enemies : When *Faith* is the Subject, then are we called upon to Love, and Joy, and Peace, and to look for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour, *Jesus Christ* : So when *Moral Duties* are pressed upon us, then are we called to *Action* ; and our Business is not to *Dispute*, but to *Obey*. And whatever Fault these modern Cavillers find with the *Whole Duty of Man*, or the practical Discourses of our Clergy, 'tis notorious to Every-body's daily and almost hourly Experience, that there never was more need of preaching up moral Honesty and Virtue, than in these sad Times, when it is the general Complaint of all sorts, that it is hardly to be found. Is this a time to decry Virtue and Morality, when there is so little left amongst us ? Is this serving Christ, to condemn and ridicule those, who call us to his Service ?—But I fear I have tired you ; and shall only add, that I would to God Men would first learn to be good Heathens, in the Practice of moral Virtue, before they set up for Perfection in Christianity, and Teachers of others ; and study *Tully's Offices* well, which contains the Duty of Man according to the Light of Nature, before they meddle with Divinity : Or, if they have *Faith*, even in as high and exalted a Pitch as they themselves imagine, that they would hear *St. Paul*, and have it to themselves before God^p ; or rather, that they would take that other Apostle's Advice, and add to their *Faith*, *Virtue*, 2 Pet. i. 5. Yea, all the other good Qualities, which he reckons up as necessary Attendants upon Faith, viz. *Knowledge*, *Temperance*, *Patience*, *Brotherly Love*, and *Charity* : Because, as he goes on, *If these things be in us and abound, they will make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of*

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our

^p Rom. xiv. 22.

our Lord Jesus Christ. But “ *He that lacketh these Things, is blind, and cannot see far off; and hath forgotten, that he was purged from his old Sins;*” that is, in Baptism, when he promised to renounce them; has forgotten *his Vow*, and broken *his Covenant*. Read on to the 14th Verse, you will find that it is by the Practice of those good Works we are to *make our Calling and Election sure—for if you do these things ye shall never fall: For so, an Entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, &c.*

Tim. Sir, I give you many Thanks for the Pains you have taken to set me right; and shall, by God’s Grace, endeavour to keep close to my Church for the future, and be a more diligent Student of the *Whole Duty of Man* than I have been, even because Mr. *Whitefield* condemns it.—I do not wonder the Dissenters, and all of their Kidney, are such declared Enemies to this Book. The Reason, I see, is plain; it is because it is an Enemy to them and their Opinions. And I now remember, that the same excellent Author imputes, very justly, the *Decay of Christian Piety** to those very Opinions, among many other Calvinistical Tenets. I shall only ask you Two more Questions: How it comes to pass, that our Clergy, in their many elaborate and earnest Discourses, both from the Pulpit and the Press, on the Subject of *Christian Morality*, meet with such small Success; insomuch that the World rather grows worse than better in their Lives and Conversations?—And the next is, How it happens, that our *Methodists*, and almost all that separate from and oppose the Church, do yet, in Appearance, and their outward Carriage, shew more Seriousness and Sanctity than our Church-people generally

* See his Book so called, p. 347, &c.

generally do : And how it is possible, that, in their Discourses and Writings, they express, and seem to feel, such seraphic Ravishments of Spirit, such transporting Sensations of the Divine Presence, and utter such melting and gracious Words, as captivate the Hearts of their Hearers, and turn so many from the grossest Immoralities to a grave, sober, and religious Course of Life ? This extraordinary and visible Effect, you may remember, was one of the things that so sensibly affected me in their Favour : And I own I cannot account for it.

Patro. Both these Questions are doubtless of great Importance. But to sift them thoroughly, and probe these Sores to the quick (for they lie at the Heart), requires a more skilful Hand than mine. I lament them both, as Evils of the deepest Concern ; but the Causes hereof are generally mistaken, or overlooked. If therefore I can, by God's Blessing, set you right in these two Points, it will be of infinite Use to settle your Mind, and secure you from two very dangerous Extremes.—As to the first : I know it is too common, even amongst Church-people, to be severe Censors of their Ministers, and to impute the ill Success of their Ministry to the Failings they observe in their Lives and Examples. But as it is not a Christian Part to *judge (for who art thou that judgest another ?)*, so neither is a Minister's private Life, how blamable soever, a just, nor the *true* Reason, why his Preaching is so unsuccessful. The Fault lies certainly more in the Hearers than in the Preacher ; that is, the true Cause why greater Conversions are not wrought by the Sermons preached in our Churches, is rather the Perverseness or Indisposition of those that hear them, than the Unworthiness of the Minister who delivers them. This appears to be the Sense of our Church, by her XXVith Article

of Religion, wherein she holds, that the *Unworthiness of the Minister* hinders not the Effect of the Word or Sacraments.—That this also was our Lord's Opinion, is plain, by that Command of his to his Disciples concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, who *sat in Moses's Chair* (*i. e.* were the instituted Teachers of the People): “ All whatsoever they bid you observe (saith he), that observe and do ; but do not after their Works : “ For they say, and do not ^{q.}” Our Lord plainly admits of their Authority to teach ; and supposes, in the Rule here given, that their Doctrine or Injunctions were good, though their Lives were not so : That the first therefore was to be followed, the other not. Whoever then has the Unhappiness to sit under an *Unworthy*, yet *duly Authorized* Teacher, his Business and Duty, we see, is to go and do, as Christ here bids him ; not to do after his *Works*, but his *Words* ; not to judge, and find Fault, but to practise : So that his Minister's Unworthiness will be no Excuse for his Non-proficiency ; much less be any Dispensation for not observing those things, which the Minister, by virtue of his Office, and legal Appointment, has Authority to bid the People to observe and do. We grant, the bad Example of a Minister is a great Stumbling-block, and Occasion of Scandal ; but it is so only to the Weak and Unlearned ; and, that therefore a Woe is pronounced against them, that give such Offence to one of these Little-ones. But we have not so learned Christ, if so be we have been taught by his Church (as we certainly are bound by his positive Command to *bear the Church*'), “ That notwithstanding evil Men have sometimes chief “ Authority in the Ministration of the Word and “ Sacraments ; yet, forasmuch as they do not the “ same in their own Name, but in Christ's, and “ do

^q Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

^r Chap. xviii. 17.

“ do minister by his Commission and Authority,
 “ we may use their Ministry in hearing the Word
 “ of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Nei-
 “ ther is the Effect of Christ’s Ordinance taken
 “ away by their Wickedness, nor the Grace of
 “ God’s Gifts diminished from such as by Faith,
 “ and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministred
 “ unto them, which be effectual because of Christ’s
 “ Institution and Promise, although they be mi-
 “ nistred by evil Men.” Art. XXVI.—This, I say,
 is the Doctrine of Christ, and of our Church. But,
 alas ! how few are there that regard it ! How few,
 even of the professed Members of her Communion,
 and the very Children she has borne and brought
 up, that are free from the Spirit of Censoriousness
 and Detraction against her Ministers ! yea, that
 take not a kind of malevolent Pleasure in railing
 at the Clergy in general ! Not only exposing, with-
 out any Reserve, their *real* Faults, but magnify-
 ing their *small*, yea, *imaginary* Failings, into
 Crimes ! Not only condemning those they know,
 but listening to evil Reports against those they have
 no Knowledge of, and taking an ill-natured Delight
 in spreading them ! I need not stand to aggravate
 the deep and complicated Guilt of such a Sin : It
 is sufficient to our Purpose to observe, that this
 prevailing and too-fashionable Practice is one of
 the principal Causes, why the many excellent Dis-
 courses delivered from our Pulpits meet with such
 small Success, and do so little Good. And what
 Wonder such a Spirit of Virulence and Detraction,
 which God is more especially said to *bate*, should
 receive no Benefit from any of the Means of Grace,
 whereof this of Preaching is one of the chief ?
 Yea, such Men not only make the very best Ser-
 mons of none Effect to Themselves, by this uncha-
 ritable Temper of Mind ; but, by blasting the
 good Name and Reputation of the Minister, they
 put

put it out of his Power (as far as in them lies) to do good to Others. This then is the true Cause, why so little Good is done by the Preaching or Writings of our Divines. It is not; you see, the Unworthiness of the Ministers, so much as the Unworthiness of the People, that obstructs the Efficacy of their Labours. A bad Minister may *do* good, by virtue of his Office and Authority, which he holds from Christ; but such bad Hearers and evil Speakers are incapable of *receiving* any.—Their Heart, like the thorny Ground, choaks the Seed, that it yieldeth no Fruit; or their Tongue and envenomed Breath blasts it, where otherwise it might have grown to Perfection.

But before I dismiss this Subject, I cannot forbear observing to you what has often occurred to my Mind; that this Reproach and Contempt thrown upon our Clergy is not only unjust in itself and unreasonable, but that it is, in Truth, a sure Mark and Evidence, that *They* are the *true* Ministers of Christ, to whom I verily think that Saying of his is more truly applicable, than to any other Clergy in the World; “Blessed are ye, “when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, “and speak all manner of Evil against you falsely “for my sake.—Rejoice and be exceeding glad, “for great is your Reward in Heaven; for so “persecuted they the Prophets which were before “you.” Now to prove the Reproach, and consequent Contempt, thrown upon our Clergy, to be unjust and unreasonable, let us but consider the Nature of those Faults which are commonly laid to their Charge. It is not the Unsoundness of their Doctrines, the Invalidity of their Office, or Illegality of their Ministrations: It is not their resisting the higher Powers, or impugning the established Order in Church or State, that is generally, or
indeed

indeed can, with any Shew of Justice, be charged upon them ; but they are only certain *personal* Failings ; such as, too free Indulgence in the Pleasures and Enjoyments of Life, the Love of Company, and a worldly Conversation ; too much Solicitude for Wealth in some, too great Neglect of their temporal Affairs in others.—If strict and severe in their Carriage, they are censured for Pride ; if open and familiar, they are presently despised.—If, in their publick or private Admonitions they sharply reprove, they are hated and abused : If they forbear to reprove, their Silence is condemned. If this be the Case (and I consider it now as it stands between the *Church-people* and their Ministers), I would only ask such free Speakers, Whether they know *no* Clergymen that are without these Blemishes in their outward Conversation ? If they do, and, for my own Part, I certainly know many, how can they answer it to God, and their own Consciences, or to that Reverence and Duty they owe to that Sacred Order, which Christ and his Church have appointed over them, to involve the Innocent with the Guilty ? Yea, how can they extend the Censure to the whole Order, as is too commonly done, when they know not, so much as by Name, or ever heard of, the thousandth Part of the Clergy in the Kingdom ?—I do not pretend they are all *Saints* ; we cannot deny but that there are too many immoral Livers, too many that are a Scandal to their Cloth. But what then ? Was there not a *Judas* among the Apostles ? And though it be an impossible thing to bring all the Clergy of our Church under a Scrutiny, yet this I think (and surely it is the most equitable Way), that, taking all that fall within the Compass of our Acquaintance or Knowledge, and comparing them together, the Number of *good* Ministers will far exceed those,

those, that are notoriously bad ; and, perhaps, did we know the whole Body of Divines, we should not find the Proportion of bad ones to be above what it was in our Lord's Family, of *one in twelve*. And, as to such Failings of any of our Ghostly Fathers, as are too notorious to be concealed, God forbid that you or I should expose their Nakedness, lest we incur the Curse and Fate of *Ham* ! No ; let us rather draw a Veil over their Defects and Imperfections, even though they were greater than they certainly are, that so the Blessing of *Shem* and *Japhet* may come upon us and our Families. This Custom of railing at the Clergy (or, as profane Men call it, *roasting the Parsons*) is one of the chief Engines by which *Satan* draws our People away from the Unity of the Church. But I hope the View we have taken of the Wickedness and Unreasonableness of such a Practice will preserve you from the Snare, and confirm you in your Adherence to her Communion.

Your next Question is, How it happens, that those in the Opposition, who are professed Adversaries of our Church, make so many Converts ; how they utter such gracious Words ; and have such seraphic Ravishments of Spirit, so transporting a Sense of the Divine Presence ?

To this I answer ; If we believe the Account these Men give of themselves, we must believe them the greatest Saints that ever were, and the only Favourites of Heaven. But, if we consult Reason and common Experience, there is more Cause to *suspect*, than *believe*, the Truth of their Pretensions. Do you trust a Man the more, for bragging of his Honesty ? Or think him a Hero, for talking of his Courage ? Or believe a Woman the more virtuous, for boasting of her Modesty ? Why then are we to count any one the better Christian, for proclaiming

claiming his Piety ? We know, our Saviour, who was the best Judge of Mankind (for *he knew what was in Man*), cautions us expressly against this Practice, as a certain Sign of Hypocrisy—*Do not sound a Trumpet, says he, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men* : And then he adds, *They have their Reward*— They have it, from their mistaken Admirers. But let not us suffer our Reason to be imposed upon, in the great Concern of our Souls, by a vain-glorious Pretence, which we should count a great Weakness to be caught by, in any secular Interest or Concern.—We are assured, that *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up* ; much less is Vaunting a Mark of *Humility*, but rather of that Vice, which God, in a more special Manner, is said to resist.

As to their *Sensations*, and spiritual Ravishments, I will grant they *have* 'em, and *feel* 'em ; but I envy them not. They are far from being Demonstrations of the Spirit of God : They may be the Effects of a *contrary* Spirit, and Marks of *Delusion*. I make no Doubt but the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had them, and yet were but *whited Sepulchres*. Even *Heathens* had the like Raptures and Ecstasies : Not only the diviner Sort of Philosophers, such as *Plato* and *Plotinus*, when they felt the ordinary sensible Visits of the Divine Love, and contemplated the Pulchritude and Beauty of Virtue, were so enraptured in their Souls, as to own themselves [*ἀνακινεῖσθαι, ἐκβαλχεύεσθαι, ἐνδυοῖσθαι*] to be transported, inebriated, and rapt into a divine Enthusiasm ; but even a *Lucretius*, an *atheistical* Poet, even while he is labouring to explode the Providence of God, and ascribing the noble Act of his Wisdom and Power, in the Creation of the World, to mere Chance, and the fortuitous Concourse of Atoms, can say in his poetic Rapture,

*Transport divine, diffus'd thro' ev'ry Vein,
Makes my Frame shudder with a pleasing Pain*.*

If we look into *Popish* Books of Devotion, or the Lives of their Saints, we shall find enough to match the highest Flights of a *Welwood*, a *Haliburton*, or a *Whitefield*. Yea, we need not doubt but *Mabomet's* boasted Converse with the Angel *Gabriel*, his Raptures into Heaven, and Revelations, were no more than the like Transports of an heated Imagination. It is certain, his Preaching in the Streets, his Pretences to a more than ordinary Sanctity and Holiness of Life, his affected Meekness, and patient Enduring of the Scoffs and Contempt he met with, at his first Setting-up for a Prophet (as you may read in his Life), were just the same with the Practice of our modern Enthusiasts. Compare also the Pretences of the first Founders of the *Jesuits* among the Papists, their *St. Ignatius*, *St. Francis*, &c. and indeed, of all Enthusiasts, either *Romish* or *Protestant*, *Lutheran* or *Calvinist*, you'll find little or no Difference in their Way and Manner of propagating their several Opinions; for how much soever they differ in religious Sentiments, so as to exclaim against, and condemn each other; yet in this they all agree, that they generally talk the same *Language*, and use much the same Methods, in promoting their favourite Tenets, and making Proselytes. You'll grant, I suppose, that the rapturous Sensations and seraphic Flights of such sort of Men, are far from being Tokens of divine Illumination; at least, where such manifest *Contradictions* appear, they cannot all have the Spirit of God, how much soever they lay Claim to it; for Truth never contradicts itself. Why then shall we give better Credit to the like specious

* ——— *Ita me quædam divina voluptas
Inficit, atque horror* ———

Lucr. L. ii.

specious Pretences of our *Methodists*?—To speak the most favourably of them, the Sensations and Impulses they feel, may be Effects of natural Causes only, as Dr. *Henry More* has observed in his *Discourse concerning Enthusiasm*, and be owing to the mere Force of Imagination, to the Disorder of the animal Spirits, or to natural Complexion. I will not say, as neither doth he, that these internal Raptures, and Transports of Mind, which such Men feel, are *always* from *Satan*; but this we may be assured of, there is no Temper of Body or Mind, which subjects us more to his Illusions, than giving too much Way to such Impulses as these.—Covet them not, therefore, but rather suspect these dangerous Sweets; be jealous over your own Heart, and always on your Guard. The Wisdom of a Christian, or what we call *Religious Prudence*, consists chiefly in ‘*trying the Spirits, whether they be of God*, as St. *John* advises, and making a just Distinction between the Operations of Grace, and the Operations of Nature; between the Influences of the Holy Spirit on our Mind, and those of the Evil one. Reason itself is often abused; and, therefore, is not a competent Judge of those inward Feelings, without the Wisdom *from above*. But if, in these Things, we too far indulge the Force of Imagination, we cannot well avoid being fatally deceived. The surest Landmark to direct us, in the Way of Grace and true Religion, is constantly to attend to that plain and visible Appointment of *Rule and Order* [the *Κόσμος* and *Τάξις*], which God has established in the World, and more especially in his Church. But Imagination has no Rule to go by, but Fancy or Humour; and is therefore a most uncertain Guide. Where-ever, then, we see *Divisions* and *Disorder*, contrary to the wise Institutions and settled Order of God and his Church, we are to *avoid* such

* 1 John iv. 1.

such Men as *cause* them ; and may most assuredly know, whatever Raptures they vaunt of, that God is not there : He was not in the *strong Wind*, that *rent the Mountains, and brake the Rocks* ; nor in the *Earthquake*, that shook the Earth ; nor yet in the *Fire*, that blazed up to Heaven ; but in the *still small Voice*.

Tim. But, still, the Reformation wrought by their Preaching, on many wicked and immoral Livers, seems a more unquestionable Argument, that their Doctrine is from God.

Patro. I will not deny, but that great Reformations have been made in the Lives of some of their Hearers ; I grant, the Conversions among the Colliers near *Bristol*, were very extraordinary : And, I confess, I was myself highly pleased with the Success they have met with on this Head, of turning the Wicked from the Error of their Ways. But when I observed, That they were making Profelytes, not to the Church, but to themselves, not to Unity and Peace, but to Separation and Division, it opened my Eyes, as it did the Eyes of many serious Persons, who love the *Church of England*, and look upon it as the best constituted and most Orthodox Church in the whole Christian World, to see plainly, that these *Conversions* were, in Truth, no other than inlisting so many Enemies, to *oppose and fight against* her. Instead of bringing back the *strayed* Sheep to her Fold, they inspired them with Prejudice and Malignancy towards her, and made them to be *evil-affected towards the Brethren* : Instead of reducing the *Dissenters*, and those who *reject* her Communion, they encouraged them in their Separation : Instead of confirming the serious Part of her Members to *continue* in her Bosom, they have laboured, with all their Might, to *draw them away* from her ; and the late visible Thinness of our Congregations is too melancholy a Proof of their Success : Yea, instead
of

of standing in the Gap against the *Papist*, the *Albeist*, the *Libertine*, they do (I will not say *designedly*, but, alas! too *effectually*) strengthen their Hands, and increase their Numbers.—What shall we say, then, of the *Reformations* they boast of?—If it be true, that there is no Salvation but in the Church; if our Church, as we have proved, be a true Church of Christ; what do these *Conversions* avail, except it be to set Men *farther off* from the Means of Grace, and the Hopes of Glory, by driving them from those holy Ministries and Ordinances of *Baptism*, *Confirmation*, and the *Lord's Supper* (which are nowhere to be ordinarily had, but in *her*), as well as depriving them of the unspeakable Benefit and Comfort of her *Prayers*, and *public Offices*? Does not our Saviour tell us, that the ^u *Pbarisees compassed Sea and Land, to make one Profelyte*? Did they not take as much Pains as these Men do, to make *Converts*? But did they make them *better Men*? No; but far *worse*, even *twofold more the Children of Hell* than they were before. Natural Ignorance is better than false Religion; yea, Publicans and Harlots shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, before proud and hypocritical *Pbarisees*. To explain the Reason of this, and to prove the *Insufficiency* of these *Conversions*, we are to consider, that all Sin is generally comprised under the three Heads, of the *Flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil*; that is, some Sins are *carnal*, some *worldly*, and others *devilish*. This is the Division our Church makes, and St. *James* doth the same, calling them *earthly*, *sensual*, *devilish*, Ch. iii. 15. Now Reformation should extend to *every one* of these, otherwise it is *no* Reformation. Our Church, therefore, requires, in her Vow at Baptism, that we should renounce them *all*. But where it happens (possibly on hearing a warm Sermon, reading a good Book, or feeling the Stings

^u Mat. xxiii. 15.

Stings of Conscience), that a notorious Drunkard, Swearer, Whoremonger, is awakened to a Sense and Abhorrence of these Immoralities, and forsakes them, so far, 'tis true, he does *well*, and makes a good Beginning ; but if he stop there, and especially if he be made believe, that a strong and confident *Faith* and *Persuasion*, that *all* his Sins are forgiven, is *sufficient*, he does but fall into a worse State than he was in before. He thinks he has done *enough*, when he scarce has *begun* to repent. He considers not, nor is instructed, by those *unskilful* Guides, to consider, That there are *Filthinesses of the SPIRIT*, as well as of the *FLESH*, which must be cleansed away ; and that these *spiritual* Sins are far more numerous, yea, far more dangerous, than those of the Body. Our Saviour teaches us this, by his Parable of the unclean Spirit ; which, after it was cast out, returned again *with seven other Spirits more wicked than himself*.—To sweep and garnish the *outward Man*, without purging the *Heart* of its *spiritual* Wickednesses, is only leaving a Door open for the Devil to return, and fortify himself the more strongly, that he may not be dispossessed again. 'Tis like skinning over a Sore before the purulent Matter is cleansed away, and driving the Corruption into the whole Mass of the Blood. To change the Sins of *Sense* for those of the *Mind*, is so much the more dangerous, because it hides our Faults from us, that we cannot discern them ; and thereby (as is very observable in all *Perfectionists*) puts a Stop to all *further* Repentance ; and, consequently (while they remain thus insensible of their *secret Sins*), renders all Hope of *Remission* fruitless and vain : Yea, it turns to a confirmed Hypocrisy ; and makes them look on their very Vices as Virtues ; and thereby exposes them to that most dreadful Mistake, of ascribing the Suggestions of *Satan* to the

the Blessed Spirit of God. Though we may not say this is *the* Sin against the Holy Ghost, because Charity forbids us to suppose it is accompanied with *Malice*, which is the Ingredient that completes that unpardonable Sin; yet, doubtless, it is one Species of that heinous Offence. It is certainly the Height of Spiritual Pride, and sets Men at once above all Conviction. It is in vain to argue with such Persons from Reason or Scripture: When once they take it into their Heads to believe, that all they do or say is from the Dictates of the Holy Spirit, they look on all that oppose them, or endeavour to convince them of their Mistake, to be poor ignorant Persons, void of the Spirit, *unregenerate*, and carnal; yea, will not allow them the Name of Christians. So that I now see the Reason of that Advice of the Apostle's to *Titus* more plainly than ever; *A Man that is an Heretic, after the first and second Admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*, Ch. iii. 10, 11.—I know what Pains have been taken, both by Letters and private Conference, to restrain some of their Leaders from these Extremes, but to no Purpose; and therefore I chuse rather to avoid, than to correspond with them any more, as despairing of any Success: But to save well-meaning Persons, who are not yet corrupted, is worth all our Pains; and, I verily think, is one of the greatest Charities we can do their Souls, as well as the best Service we can do both the Church and State at this time. The more serious any one is, if not well grounded in his Principles, the greater is the Danger of his being misled by their fair Speeches and counterfeit Sanctity. To keep these from falling away, is *lifting up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees*: But to bring back any of the Members of our Church that are already gone astray, is pluck-

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ing a Brand out of the Fire, and rescuing from the Jaws of Destruction.—As to those who *always* dissented from us, I chuse to say with St. Paul, *What have I to do to judge them that are without ?* Whether they turn Methodists, or continue as they are, seems to me a thing indifferent : But I judge them not : *Them that are without, God judgeth.*

And now having answered your Objections, it is high time to conclude. If I have not said all I might say on this Occasion, nor expressed myself so fully and so well in what I have said, as I wish I could ; yet, as I am conscious of my sincere Desire to serve you in a Concern of so great Moment, I hope that God will give a Blessing to what I have said, although in much Weakness : And that he, who often chuses the weak things of the World for his Instruments, will, by his Grace and Holy Spirit, stablish, strengthen, settle you in the Truth, and in the Unity of the Church, which is the Pillar and Ground of Truth. As you did not mention which of the new Sects you were invited to turn to, whether *Moravians* or *Inghamites*, *Westleyites* or *Whitefieldians* ; neither do I inquire. This I know, that however they differ one from another, they all agree in opposing our happy Establishment. But if I have any-where expressed any Warmth or Sharpness, I beg you will do me the Justice to understand my Words as I intended them, not as condemning their *Persons*, but their *Doctrines* and *Practice*. Many of them I once most tenderly loved, and do still love with the Affection of Charity ; but their Doctrines I cannot but look upon to be as pernicious as any that have been broached since Christianity appeared in the World. But what grieves me, even to Tears, is to see them mis-spend so much Pains and Labour, so much of their precious Time, their good Parts and Learning,

Learning, in propagating Doctrines so contrary to Truth, as well as the Peace of the Church, as cannot tend to Edification, but to Destruction.

Tim. I agree with you, that their Conduct is very faulty ; but I cannot but think their *Intentions* are good.

Patro. I do not suspect their good Intentions ; nor can I suppose, that *any* Founders of Heresies meant or *intended* to propagate their Errors as Errors, and knowing them to be so. Whatever might be the secret Cause why God permits such Tares to be sown in the Field of his Church, we may reasonably, at least charitably, presume, the *Intentions* of those who sowed them were *good*. Their unhappy Error lay, as these Mens doth, in mistaking the Tares for the Wheat, and the good Corn for the Tares. This, I say, grieves my Soul, when I see a most commendable Zeal so *misapplied*, and such unwearied Industry employed to so bad a Purpose. Had they exerted their Labour and Talents in Conformity to the Rules, and within the Pale of the Church, according to their Canonical Vows, what glorious Effects might it not have produced ! Had they lifted up their Voice like a Trumpet ; had they cried aloud and spared not, to shew the People of this our Church their Transgression, and this whole Nation their Sins, what a happy Reformation might they not have wrought amongst us ! Never was Atheism and Infidelity at a greater Height among the Profane ; never more Lukewarmness and Indifference for Religion among the Professors ; never more Injustice, Oppression, and Violence in our Dealings of all kinds ; never more Luxury, Intemperance, and Sensuality, among our Lovers of Pleasure ; in a word, never so great Immoralities of every sort, throughout this whole Nation, as in these loose and degenerate Times. What then,

in so critical a Juncture, and when we are all upon the Brink of Destruction, was the Duty of the Priests, the Ministers of God, but to sound an Alarm in his holy Mountain, and to call aloud to Repentance, to Weeping, Fasting, and Mourning, that so Iniquity may not be our Ruin? To call more earnestly than ever, to eschew Evil, and to do Good; to strengthen the Hands of our Spiritual Pastors, to oppose all the declared Enemies of our Church, to comfort the Feeble-minded, and to support the Weak? But have *they* done this? Have *they* not done the very Reverse?—as I have already shewn, and need not repeat.

Tim. 'Tis true, you have; and give me leave to sum up what you have said, that you may see I have not been an unattentive Scholar.

You have satisfied me, that the Church of *England* is a sound Part of the Catholic Church; that in *her*, therefore, as the only established Church in *England*, we of this Nation are to look for that *Communion of Saints*, and Mystical Body of Christ, to which we are to be joined; and from which we ought not to separate.

That the Church of *England*, by Law established, is an orthodox and true Church, you have proved, by her holding the very same *Baptismal Covenant* which the Universal Church hath held at all Times, and in all Parts of the World.

That this Covenant is the *Charter* and Title-Deed, by which all true Christians are incorporated into that holy Society, which we call the *Catholic Church*, whereof Christ alone is the Head, and by which they are intitled to that eternal Inheritance he purchased with his Blood, and settled on them in Baptism.

That this Covenant consisting, as all Covenants necessarily do, of certain Terms and Conditions stipulated between the Parties concerned, all our
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Hopes of obtaining the Privileges promised to us of God, depend on our Fidelity in *performing* the Promises we then made to him.

That, in a word, this *Second Covenant* is no other than the Sum and Substance of the Gospel, by which we are to square our Lives, both as to Faith and Practice; and that, according as we do so, we shall be acquitted or condemned at the last Day.

I take the more Notice of the Nature, Conditions, and Benefits of this Sacred *Covenant*, because I cannot but see the Truth of that Observation you made, that a right Understanding of our Baptismal Vow would not only prevent all Heresies and Schisms among Christians, but is a sure Touchstone to try and judge of all those Errors, and unsound Doctrines, which have ever crept into the Church, especially such as at present disturb her Peace. So that by this Light we might very easily *mark those who cause Divisions, and avoid them*; and, at the same time, be as easily assured, that the Certainty of our Salvation depends on the faithful and uniform Performance of our holy Vow—That is to say, a Performance, not *in Part*, but *in Whole*, even every Part of our Covenant; so as to repent sincerely of *all* our Sins, believe faithfully *all* the Articles of our holy Faith, and obey, to the best of our Power, *all* the Laws and Commandments of God: That whereas it appears, by the Histories of all the Heresies that have ever been in the Christian Church, that the great Stratagem of the Enemy of our Salvation has chiefly been levelled against our holy Covenant, sometimes attacking *one Part* of it, sometimes *another*, and now at length against the *Whole* of it, by flatly denying, that *ever* any such Covenant has been made between God and Man; it becomes more incumbent than ever upon us, who live in such perilous Times, to

hold fast our Profession, which we made before many Witnesses; to contend earnestly for, and more strictly than ever adhere to, this sacred Charter of our Salvation; even to *every* Branch of it, that so, with the holy Psalmist, we may *Daily perform our Vows*.

I need not recapitulate what you have said about *Regeneration, Assurance, Faith, Good Works, &c.* because I see plainly that the Baptismal Vow, rightly understood, is a Key to all those Points, and indeed to the whole Scriptures; and all the Disputes and Controversies in Religion. So that I have only to conclude with my sincere Thanks for so concise, and yet so plain a Rule for my Direction, both as to Doctrine and Practice. But I shall be still the more obliged to you, if you recommend some Books to assist and confirm me herein.

Patro. My Advice is still the same; that you study chiefly those Books, which I have called the *Books of the Church*.

First, Of these the BIBLE holds undoubtedly the *first* Place.—As the Church translated it, the *Translation* she puts into our Hands may properly be called *Her Book*. The *true* and *very* Word of God is that only, which is contained in the *Original* Languages, namely, *Hebrew* of the Old Testament, and *Greek* of the New.—And pray mind this Remark; for this is one of the great Reasons why we are to *seek the Law at the Mouth of the Priest* ^w; I mean, of those who have been educated in the Church, and then ordained, to teach and expound to us the Word and Will of God. Trust not, therefore, wholly to your own private Judgment, especially if it contradict the received Sense of the Translators and *instituted* Teachers of it. But, that you may the better understand what that Sense is, and so be furnished with a good Rule to judge, whether your present Teachers deliver to you, in their Books or

^w Mal. ii. 7.

Sermons,

Sermons, the *true* Doctrines and genuine Sense of the Church ; there is one Direction I must recommend to you, which I think a very sure Guide, though too little attended to ; and that is, to have a particular Regard to those Parts of the holy Scriptures, which the Church calls *Proper Lessons*. The Chapters that are appointed to be read on common Days, she styles *Lessons* only ; but on the *Sundays*, and great Festivals and Holidays of the Year, she makes a Distinction, because she then suits her Instructions to the *Season*, and therefore selects those Portions, that are most *proper* to the Occasion.—To observe this, is, I say, the best Key to open to us, not only the Design and Use of such a *Sunday* or *Holiday*, but is the best Comment to explain the Sense, in which our Church understands those Scriptures. For as the Lesson expounds the Design of the *Sunday* or *Festival*, so the Design of the Day points out to us the true Meaning, as well as Propriety of the Lesson ; and both together concur to let us into the Doctrine of the Church. So that there cannot be a surer Guide for the Clergy to come at the true Sense and Doctrines of the Church, or for the Laity to judge aright of the Truth and Soundness of the Sermons they hear, or the Books they read, than a diligent Attention to the *Proper Lessons* of our Church. This Remark deserves further Explication, were this the Place for it ; but thus much we may observe, that there appears to be a twofold Reason why the Church calls those Scriptures *Proper Lessons*. The one is what we observed before, namely, the Suitableness of the *Lesson* to the Design of the *Day* ; the other, and I conceive the principal, is, the Reference and more immediate Aspect the Church professedly hath to our holy *Covenant*, which is the main Subject she insists upon, and labours to instruct her Members in, throughout the

the Year ; and such *Lessons*, as are best adapted to *this* Purpose she, deservedly, calls *Proper*. As this most useful Subject hath not, that I know of, been attempted by any, I have, for my own Use and my Family's, made it my Study for many Years, to meditate upon the *Proper Lessons* of our Church, and to consider their signal Propriety and Fitness, with respect to the *Baptismal Vow*. The Benefit I have myself received thereby, makes me wish, that others would do the same. For which Reasons, I cannot but earnestly recommend the like Study to you, not doubting but you will find the *Proper Lessons* to be the best *Sermons*, yea the most complete Body of Divinity, that ever was extant, as well as the surest and best Interpreter of the whole Scripture. And as these *Lessons* are the *pure Word* of God, so admirably chosen, methodized, and dictated to us by the Church, which is *the Pillar and Ground of Faith*, so we are assured, that that gracious Prophecy, that * *They shall be all taught of God*, is thus literally fulfilled to us, and to all serious and attentive Students thereof.

Secondly, The next Book I commend to you is the LITURGY of the Church. I shall not expatiate on the Excellency of its Use or Composure : Do but read, and consider it well, you will, I am persuaded, be of the same Opinion with that wise Parliament, who voted it to be compiled *by the Aid of the Holy Ghost*. The more you study it, the more Beauties will you discover in it ; especially when you join in it with that Fervour and Devotion, which intelligent and well-disposed Minds cannot but feel in a serious and devout Use of it. There are great Numbers of *Expositions* upon our Liturgy, which will assist you in the right Understanding of all its Parts ; and you can hardly chuse amiss. I shall name to you only

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* Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45.

two or three ;—Bishop *Beveridge's* 'Sermon on the Excellency of the Common Prayer ; Bishop *Sparrow's* *Rationale* ; and Dr. *Bisse's* four Sermons on the Beauty of Holiness.—Read likewise the several *Acts for Uniformity* ; and pray take Notice, that the whole Book of Common Prayer is an *Act of Parliament*, a Law of the Land, as well as of the Church in Convocation ; so that every Rubric, as well as every Office and Form of Prayer, is bound upon our Conscience, to conform thereto, by the united Authority both of Church and State, as well as by its incomparable Excellence.—And a threefold Cord is not to be easily broken.

Thirdly, Her next Book is her XXXIX ARTICLES. And let me observe to you, that as, in her *Catechism*, she teaches us only the *Fundamentals* of Christianity, in which she agrees with the whole Catholic Church, and with all other true Christian Churches in the World ; so, in her *Articles*, she gives us her *own* Opinions and Sentiments as a *National Church*, as the Church of *England* ; and shews not only how she *agrees* with the holy Catholic Church, but wherein she *differs* from, and rejects, all unsound Opinions, which Heretics, or some corrupted Churches, have maintained. The best Expositions that I know, are Bishop *Beveridge's*, as far as it is complete, and Archdeacon *Welchman's* in Latin, or as lately translated into English.—I have only to add, that as to the XVIIth Article, concerning *Predestination*, you will find the Baptismal Vow the best Key to explain it : If your holy Covenant is *conditional*, so is *Predestination*.—They are perfectly reconcilable to each other ; and the Church must not be supposed to contradict herself. They are like two Bearings at Sea, which when the Mariner observes to meet in a Point, he then knows where he is, and that his Course is right.

4. Another of our Church's Books, is her *Book of Laws*, which she calls *CONSTITUTIONS and CANONS Ecclesiastical*. *Canon* is a *Greek Word*, signifying a *Rule*. Herein, by a modest and mild Expression, she has set before us her Orders and Injunctions, calling them *Rules* rather than *Laws*, which our spiritual Governors had framed and agreed upon in Convocation, *for the Good and Quiet of the Church, and the better Government thereof*. This Book, then, contains her Directions concerning the *external* Polity of the Church, as she is a Society or Body of Christian People. And whereas her *Catechism* (as was before observed) consists only of Essentials, and those fundamental Principles, which constitute her very Being as a Christian Church; and as her *Articles* are Notes of her *Orthodoxy* in all doctrinal as well as fundamental Points; so her *Canons* contain her Rules of *Discipline*, by which her *Well-being*, as a *national* Church, is to be secured and preserved. If in the first, she appear, without Controversy, truly Catholic; if in the second, truly orthodox, pure and holy, without Spot or Wrinkle, and free from all impure Mixtures; in her *Canons*, we may say, she exercises and exerts her Authority, and those spiritual Powers, wherewith Christ her Head has invested her. But altho' some of these Powers are purely *spiritual*, and independent of any *secular* Power, such as the Sentence of *Excommunication*, which, we find, she uses as the Sanction and Penalties in some of her *Canons*; yet, as she has the Happiness to be incorporated with the State, or Civil Government of the Realm, and so enjoys, by God's Blessing, a temporal Interest in and under the Protection of the Magistrate, she not only acknowledges the King's *Supremacy* over her, as a *National Church*, in *all Causes Ecclesiastical* (which she doth in her very first Canon), and denounces an Excommunication in her second

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against all Impugners thereof ; but, under the Favour and Indulgence of the Civil Government, to which she owes her National Establishment, she proceeds to regulate, 1st, Her *external Polity* ; 2dly, The *Divine Service*, and *Administration of the Sacraments* ; 3dly, Her *Ministers*, their *Ordination*, *Function*, and *Charge* ; 4thly, *Schoolmasters*, 5thly, *Things appertaining to Churches* ; 6thly and 7thly, *Churchwardens* and *Parish-clerks* ; then, lastly, Her *Ecclesiastical Courts*, and *their Officers* ; concluding with her Judgment concerning the *Authority of National Synods or Councils*, and particularly of the Synod, by which these *Canons* were made and decreed. The Consideration of these Things, together with the Royal Assent and Approbation, under the Great Seal of *England*, whereby these *Constitutions* and *Canons* are Ratified, Confirmed, and Established ; and that, too, according to the *Form of a certain Statute or Act of Parliament made in that Behalf* ; should convince us of our Obligation to observe all that is contained in them. And, altho' we admit (as we readily do) of the Distinction, which naturally occurs, that some of them are, in their own Nature, mere Matter of Discipline ; and the Penalties (being pecuniary or corporal) are properly Acts of *secular* Power, which the Civil Magistrate *only* has Authority to impose and inflict ; and, consequently, are *repealable* by the same Power ; yet the Censures or Penalties of a *spiritual* Nature, which the Church *only* has a Power to denounce, cannot be reversed by any other Authority, but that which ^{is} *spiritual*. Did those, who call themselves Members of our Church, seriously peruse, consider and ponder, the Contents of this Book, they would not make so light thereof, as too many do ; neither would they, who dissent from her, find any Reason to flatter themselves, that they are exempted, by

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the Act of *Toleration*, from the Guilt of Schism, or the Censure pronounced by the *Canons* for their Separation from the Church. The Impunity they enjoy (and I am far from envying them this Privilege) is only a Discharge (and that, too, under certain Restrictions) from those Penalties in the *Canons*, which are purely *temporal*; but the Penalties and Censures, which are inflicted by the *spiritual* Power, remain in full Force against them. Let them, therefore, look to it; for what Mr. *Wheatley* says of the *Liturgy*, we may, with equal Truth, say with relation to the *Canons*; “ As they are established by Ecclesiastical Authority, they oblige in
 “ *foro conscientiae*; and those, who disclaim this
 “ Authority, and refuse Obedience to them, are
 “ *Schismatics*, and consequently are guilty of a
 “ damnable Sin, which no *Toleration*, granted by
 “ the *Civil* Magistrate, can authorize or justify.
 “ But, as they are confirmed by Royal Authority,
 “ by virtue of an Act of Parliament, they oblige
 “ only in *foro civili*; and their rejecting of them
 “ is an Offence against the State, and, as such,
 “ may be pardoned by the State. The Act of
 “ *Toleration*, therefore, has freed the Dissenters
 “ from being Offenders against the *State*, notwithstanding their Separation from the *Church*; but
 “ it by no means excuses, or can excuse them,
 “ from the *Schism* they have made in the Church.
 “ They are still guilty of that Sin, and will be, so
 “ long as they separate, notwithstanding any *temporal* Authority to indemnify them.”

5. Another of our Church's Books is the Book of HOMILIES. This is a *Greek* Word, signifying *Discourses*, being the Term by which the *Greek* Fathers called their Discourses, or, as we usually call them, their *Sermons*.—Preaching being an Ordinance of the Gospel, frequently used by our Sa-

viour while he was upon Earth, practised by the Apostles, and expressly commanded by the Word of God [²*Preach the Word*, says St. Paul to Timothy; and, ^a*Woe is unto me, if I preach not*, says the same Apostle of himself]; the Church of England has considered this Ordinance as a Duty absolutely incumbent on her Ministers; and therefore, that she might, in no respect, be wanting in her Care of Christ's Flock within her Fold, but be perfect and complete in every Part of her sacred Charge, she compiled this Book of *Homilies* or Sermons, in two Volumes; which, containing a great Number of Discourses on the most useful Subjects, are not only Patterns of fit Matter and Method for the Direction of her Ministers, but likewise for the Instruction of the People. These, also, are Ratified and Confirmed by Royal Authority, as you may see by her XXXVth Article of Religion. And though the Style and Language be now somewhat antiquated by Length of Time, you will find they contain (as the Article truly expresses it) a *godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these Times*. I cannot but wish they had been revised, as our Liturgy was, and the Phrase reformed from such Expressions as are grown obsolete, and the Proofs of Scripture accommodated to our present Translation, that so both Minister and People might be induced to read them oftener than they do. Dr. Nourse has indeed dressed several of them in the modern Style; but I humbly think they would be more edifying in their native Simplicity, with only such proper Amendments made, as above-mentioned. Nor can I think the florid Style, which, of late Years, has been introduced into our Pulpits, of such Advantage to the Christian Doctrines, as some seem to think. This studied Elegance of Language

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² 2 Ep. iv. 2.^a 1 Cor. ix. 16.

may tickle the Ear ; but I fear (if I may speak from my own Experience or Observation) it seldom moves the Heart. For which Reason I the more earnestly recommend the *Homilies* to your Perusal : And, to fit them the better to your own Use, you may do as I have done, and alter with your Pen any Words or Phrases that are grown quite out of Use, for such as are more modern ; and then you will read them with more Pleasure, and consequently, I hope, with more Profit.

6. I have but one Book more of our Church to mention, and that is what she calls, *The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*. Read over this with due Seriousness and Care, and, I am persuaded, you will agree with me, that it is a most admirable and well-devised Office. It is a Thing absolutely necessary, both to the Constitution of the Church, especially her external Polity, as well as the Cure of Souls committed to her Care, that she should have lawful and authentic *Governors* ; and that her People should indubiously know, *who they are*, in order to regulate their Conduct and Obedience. Without some such Form as this, how could those, who acknowledge our Church to be truly Catholic and Orthodox, and her Laws to be holy, just, and good, *obey them that have the Rule over them, and submit themselves* ? How should they *know and see their Teachers* ? (which was foretold as one of the great Privileges of the Gospel, *Is. xxx. 20.*) How should we discern the Guides we are to follow ? How should we distinguish the Messengers and Embassadors of God, without these Credentials, from the Ministers of *Satan* ? Or, indeed, how should any Man presume to preach the Gospel, to administer the Sacraments, to be a Steward of the Mysteries of God, and to bear Rule in the Church, except he have a certain prescribed Rule,

Rule, by which he himself, as well as others, may know, that he is *lawfully* appointed thereto by those, who have public Authority to call and send Labourers into the Lord's Vineyard? As this is the Form by which fit Persons (and none are deemed *fit*, but such as, upon Examination, appear to be so) are thus *called* and *sent*; so it is evident to every Man, that, by the standing Laws both Ecclesiastical and Civil of this Nation, *none* have Authority to officiate or act as Ministers in *England*, but *those*, who are ordained according to *this* Form, and have thereby public Authority given them to preach and minister to the People. As to the Dissenters, I shall say nothing. But our *Methodist* Teachers (such, I mean, as have been ordained by this Form) are most inexcusable, in that they make no Conscience of violating their most sacred Engagements, then entered into before the Church, and in the Presence of God, binding their Souls to the Performance in the most solemn manner. See the Questions then put to them by the Bishop, particularly the two following; and their Answers thereto.

“ *The Bishop.* Will you give your faithful Diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and AS THIS CHURCH AND REALM HATH RECEIVED THE SAME” [i. e. in Conformity to the *Liturgy, Articles, and Canons* established by the Laws of both Church and State], “ according to the Commandments of God; so that you may teach the People committed to your Care and Charge, with all Diligence, to keep and observe the same?”

“ *Answer.* I will do so, by the Help of the Lord.

“ *The Bishop.* Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the Charge and Government over
“ you;

“ you ; following, with a glad Mind and Will, their
 “ godly Admonitions, and submitting yourself to
 “ their godly Judgments?

“ *Answer.* I will do so, the Lord being my
 “ Helper.”

Now, Sir, I hardly need observe to you, that these Answers contain in them the Force and Solemnity of an Oath, being, with some small Variation, of the Words, the very same, in effect, with that Form, wherewith public Oaths in *England* are usually taken, *So help me God* ; and, consequently, are no less binding. And I leave you to judge, whether they have complied herewith ; or rather, whether they have not broken these solemn Vows in the most notorious Manner. And are these fit Guides to follow ? fit Instructors of the Truth ? who so openly, so daringly, falsify their most sacred Engagements of Canonical Obedience ; who subject themselves to the Censures of the Church, by committing those very Things, for which she declares the Committers of them to be *Excommunicate, ipso facto* ; and not only do this themselves, but have Pleasure in them that do them ; yea, in direct Opposition to their Trust, compass Sea and Land, and take all imaginable Pains to seduce others from the Unity of the Church ; and yet are not afraid to come to the holy Altar ? But I shall not aggravate — Your own Reflections must convince you, that Men, who in fact have Excommunicated themselves, cannot be right or safe Guides to Salvation. Whatever they talk of *Faith* (which undoubtedly is the true Way to Life), you may ^b know by their *Fruits* (which our Saviour gives us as the surest Mark), what Way they are in. And, if Men gather *Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*, then will you be in the right to follow them. And whence

^b Mat. vii. 15, 16.

comes this Torrent of Error and Enthusiasm, but because the Members of our Church, and too many of our young Divines, do not peruse, or sufficiently attend to, *these* Books, this little Library of our holy Mother the Church of *England*, which I have been recommending to you?

Tim. I cannot sufficiently express my Thanks for your kind Advice, and particularly this last Direction, which I now plainly see is so reasonable and so necessary for all the Members of the Church of *England*; yet never once thought of this Method before: And I hope, that God will give a Blessing to your Admonitions, and strengthen my Resolutions to follow them.

F I N I S.



*The Absence of the Author has occasioned the following
Errata, which the Reader is desired to correct.*

- P. 24. To the Word AMEN, l. 9. the following Note should
have been placed in the Margin;— *Amén in the Liturgy,
where-ever it is printed in the Roman Character, is to be
pronounced by the Minister. It is so printed in the Form of
Baptism, and has a like operative Force with a Lord Chan-
cellor's FIAT to a Royal Grant.*
32. l. 24. for *Practisers*, r. *Pretenders*.
35. in the marginal Note, dele the Comma after *Works*.
48. l. 23. dele of the *Holy Spirit by the*, and read *and*.

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